

THIRTY-FIFTH REPORT OF THE

NEW ZEALAND

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

(from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025)

L Aid before the House of Representatives
Pursuant to
Section 150 of the Crown Entities Act 2004

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

THE NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2025**


The New Zealand Council of Legal Education (the Council) is responsible for preparation of the Financial Statements and Statement of Performance, and for the judgements used in the production of these statements.

The Council is also responsible for establishing and maintaining a system of internal control designed to provide reasonable assurance as to the integrity and reliability of financial reporting and non-financial reporting.

In the Council's opinion, the attached Financial Statements, the Statement of Performance, and the notes which should be read in conjunction with those statements, fairly reflect the operations of the Council for the year ended 31 December 2025 and the financial position of the Council at that date.



The Honourable Justice N Campbell
Chair



The Honourable Justice K Tahana
Council Member

24 April 2026

NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT FOR
THE YEAR FROM 1 JANUARY 2025 TO 31 DECEMBER 2025

1. BACKGROUND

Between 1841 and 1930 legal education, and the requirements for admission to the profession in New Zealand, were the responsibility of the Judiciary of New Zealand pursuant to a number of Colonial Ordinances and Acts of Parliament, and prescribed in consecutive sets of Judges' Rules. After the establishment of the University of New Zealand in 1870 the practical implementation of the admission requirements was progressively delegated by the Judiciary to the University.

In 1925, a Royal Commission which had been commissioned to examine a number of matters relating to University education in New Zealand, recommended that –¹

...a Council of Legal Education representative of the Judges, the leaders among practising barristers and solicitors, and the University teachers of law is the most satisfactory method for providing and for watching over a course of legal education which shall comply with the requirements of a good professional education, and at the same time satisfy the demand for a training which is strong enough on the practical side.

Accordingly in 1930 the Council of Legal Education was established.² The original Council consisted of six members: two judges of the Supreme Court, two representatives of the New Zealand Law Society, and two law professors or teachers from the University of New Zealand. The Council was given recommendatory powers for the purpose of enabling the University to discharge its functions, which concurrently with the establishment of the Council had been given the responsibility for prescribing and conducting the necessary legal qualifications and examinations.³

In 1961 the University of New Zealand was dissolved and the constituent Colleges established in their own right.

In order to preserve uniformity across law degrees, to maintain standards, and to secure input from representatives of all, rather than one particular category of stakeholder in legal education, the Council of Legal Education was reconstituted in 1961 as an independent statutory body⁴ to take over the role of defining, prescribing and arranging for the provision of courses of study, including practical training, for those persons (from New Zealand and overseas) wishing to be admitted as barristers and solicitors, and generally to supervise legal education in New Zealand.

In 1961 the membership of the Council consisted of representatives from the Judiciary, the New Zealand Law Society, and the Law Schools. By 1982 membership had been extended to

¹ *University Education in New Zealand* (Royal Commission) (AJHR 1925, E-7A), page 45.

² New Zealand University Amendment Act 1930.

³ Law Practitioners Amendment Act 1930.

⁴ Law Practitioners Amendment Act 1961.

encompass a District Court Judge and law student representation, and by 1990 a non-lawyer member nominated by the Minister of Justice.

A major change to the operation and funding of the Council occurred in 1990 with the disestablishment of the University Grants Committee, as from 30 June of that year.⁵

The Council's activities had previously been carried out within the framework of the University Grants Committee and it had been a source of funding for the Council which was no longer available, although the Council was subsequently given the power to charge fees for its services, and also began to receive funding from the New Zealand Law Foundation pursuant to section 91F(2)(b)(ii)(B) of the Law Practitioners Act 1982.

The Education Amendment Act 1990 amended the Law Practitioners Act 1982. Some major consequences for the Council were –

- (a) It expanded the membership of the Council to strengthen the interests of the public without affecting the balance between academic and professional legal interests which had always been a characteristic of the Council.
- (b) It established the Council as a body corporate with perpetual succession, a common seal, and the rights, powers and privileges necessary to carry out its functions.
- (c) It established the basis for the Council to be subject to Part V of the Public Finance Act 1989 as if it were a Crown entity specified in the Fourth and Fifth Schedules to that Act.
- (d) It authorised the charging of fees for work done or services performed by the Council and for entry into the Council's examinations.
- (e) It made requirements of the Council as an employer, including consultation with the State Services Commission.
- (f) It set out the Council's financial responsibilities and exempted it from income tax.
- (g) It set out the Council's duty to report annually to the Minister of Justice.

The Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006 was passed in March 2006 and came into force on 1 August 2008.

The Council is covered by Part 8 of the Act. The Council was reconstituted with its current form and membership. Some changes were made to the Council's operations as noted below –

- (a) The Council was renamed the New Zealand Council of Legal Education.
- (b) The functions and powers of the Council, whilst remaining essentially the same as in the 1982 Act, were enhanced and modernised to reflect current terminology and practices.

⁵ Education Amendment Act 1990.

- (c) A new function was introduced into the Council's role, namely responsibility for recognition of qualifications for the purposes of the principles set out in section 15 of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1996.
- (d) The Act makes the Council responsible for making the final decision in respect of the assessment of applications of all overseas graduates and overseas admitted practitioners.
- (e) The Act confirms that the Council may deliver courses itself, or arrange for the delivery of courses by other providers.
- (f) There is a specific power enabling the Council to license other providers of practical legal training.
- (g) The funding mechanism for the Council was changed and secured. Section 277 of the Act requires the New Zealand Law Society to levy practitioners annually to secure the necessary funding for the Council's operations.
- (h) With respect to the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, new provisions were included in the Act. Under these provisions the Council is statutorily required to maintain the Institute in its current form as a committee of Council. An express requirement was imposed on the Council to ensure that the Institute continues to provide practical legal training for candidates for admission as barristers and solicitors of the High Court.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL As at 31 December 2025

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nominated By</u>
The Honourable Justice N Campbell (Chair)	Chief Justice
The Honourable Justice K Tahana	Chief Justice
The Honourable Judge J Johnston	Chief District Court Judge
Ms H Bowie	New Zealand Law Society
Ms N Coates	New Zealand Law Society
Ms K Dalziel	New Zealand Law Society
Mr D Green	New Zealand Law Society
Ms M Wikaira	New Zealand Law Society
Ms M Grant	New Zealand Law Students Assoc
Ms R Shasha	New Zealand Law Students Assoc
Vacant	Minister of Justice

EX OFFICIO — DEANS OF LAW FACULTIES/SCHOOLS

Professor S Watson	University of Auckland
Professor K Quince	Auckland University of Technology
Professor L Tuala-Warren	University of Waikato
Professor G McLay	Victoria University of Wellington
Professor P Butler	University of Canterbury
Associate Professor B Toy-Cronin	University of Otago

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive is responsible for discharging all responsibilities and duties required by the role pursuant to the Council's operations under Part 8 of the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006.

The Chief Executive is statutorily responsible for the efficient operation of the organisation, including the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, and must ensure and promote compliance with all statutory obligations imposed on the Council.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Council's operations are conducted in a manner that conveys the highest personal, professional, and ethical standards, and conforms to standards and values expected of a public sector entity.

The Chief Executive of the Council is Rosemary Gordon, MNZM, a Wellington lawyer.

4. **MEETINGS**

The full Council met twice in 2025. The meetings were held in person, with some members attending remotely, in May 2025 and November 2025.

5. **OVERALL WORK OF THE COUNCIL**

Major Tasks

The major tasks of the Council during the year, in discharge of its functions in the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006, were –

- maintaining the work of the Council;
- maintaining the work of the Institute (see section 18 on the Institute of Professional Legal Studies);
- meeting the requirements of the legal status of the Council;
- securing funding for the general work of the Council;
- maintaining the servicing arrangements for the Council; and
- ensuring the organisation and oversight of practical legal training in New Zealand.

General Activities

The Council is a regulatory body and is responsible for the regulation, quality and provision of legal training for those wishing to be admitted as barristers and solicitors to the profession in New Zealand.

These activities include –

- setting courses of study for the examination and practical legal training of persons wishing to be admitted as barristers and solicitors in New Zealand;
- providing, or arranging for the provision of, those courses of study;
- arranging for the moderation and assessment of those courses of study;
- assessment of qualifications, particularly those of overseas law graduates and legal practitioners wishing to practise in New Zealand;

- arranging for the provision of research as necessary, and tendering advice on legal education;
- administering and conducting certain examinations.

To carry out its tasks in discharge of its functions set out in the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006, the Council maintained its general liaison with the Judiciary, the legal profession, the Universities and law students, and specifically undertook the activities detailed below.

6. PROVISION OF COURSES

Compulsory Law Subjects

The Council prescribes the core curriculum for the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and monitors these subjects through a moderation system.

The six compulsory subjects which are moderated are –

- Law of Contracts
- Law of Torts
- Criminal Law
- Public Law
- Property Law (or Land Law, and Equity and Succession where Property Law is not offered.)
- Tikanga Māori: Māori Laws and Philosophy (from 2025)

In respect of each of the above subjects, the examination papers are drafted by course lecturers with the agreement of a moderator appointed by the Council. Moderation is also required for Legal Ethics which is a compulsory course for admission to the profession. A seventh Council prescribed core degree subject (Legal System) is not moderated, owing to the introductory nature of the course and variations between courses.

The role of the moderator is threefold. The moderator ensures that the examination paper is of a satisfactory standard, and must be satisfied that there has been adequate coverage of the Council prescription. The moderator also ensures that the standard of examination is comparable between Law Schools.

The moderators are required to report annually to the Council on the moderation process in their subject area. These reports provide valuable information for the Council on the examinations, and the courses generally, in the compulsory subjects of the law degree, and also provide an opportunity for the Council to be informed of any administrative or substantive difficulties, to take action to remedy any problems, and to ensure that the courses are generally taught in a manner which conforms to the Council's requirements.

It is also valuable for the Law Schools to receive an independent outside view on the operation of these courses, particularly vis-à-vis other Universities. The moderation procedures also ensure fairness for students in that a uniform system is shown to be operating over all the compulsory subjects.

During 2025 in the course of administering the moderation system the Council, inter alia, approved the appointment of moderators from amongst legal practitioners nominated for their academic ability and legal experience, and members of the Judiciary. The Council received and noted the moderators' reports. In 2025 the Council appointed two moderators for the new tikanga Māori: Māori Laws and Philosophy compulsory stand-alone subject.

Te Ao Māori

At the 2021 Council meeting the Council resolved that Te Ao Māori concepts, particularly tikanga Māori, would be taught in each of the core law subjects within the Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Laws with Honours degree at a New Zealand university as established by the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 2008 ("Regulations"). The Council consulted a range of stakeholders on the implementation of the resolution, including the judiciary, law schools, professional associations, and student associations.

The results of the consultation process were considered at the Council's meeting in March 2022. The Council resolved that Māori Law and Tikanga Māori should be a compulsory subject for the LLB, and that the course content would be developed with regard to the ongoing work of the Borrin Foundation, in consultation with the Council. The Council secondly resolved that Māori Law and Tikanga Māori would also be taught to the extent possible as part of each of the existing core subjects in the LLB, and for Legal Ethics. These two resolutions would be considered by the sub-committee of the Council established in May 2021, and the Council would consider them a meeting to be held in May 2022. At that meeting, the Council considered the recommendations of the sub-committee and resolved to engage, in the first instance, two joint moderators, Dr Rangī Mātāmua and Matanuku Mahuika, who would advise on the course prescription changes necessary to give effect to the resolutions, and to establish a committee of the Council which would recommend two wahine Māori as additional moderators. At its August 2022 meeting, the Council resolved to appoint Deputy Chief Judge Caren Fox and Professor Rawinia Higgins in this role.

At its 2021 meeting the Council had agreed that work should commence on preparing amendments to the Regulations consequent upon the above changes. At its May 2022 meeting the Council agreed to progress the consultation and drafting of those amendments, and the consultation with stakeholders took place in July 2022. The consultation indicated universal support for the main aspects of the proposals. The Māori law academics group gave significant feedback on a number of matters of drafting of the Regulations as well as process and resourcing (including the First Schedule which sets out the prescription of the core law subjects.).

At its August 2022 meeting, the Council discussed aspects of the draft amendments and prescription, as well as the need for some flexibility in assessment. The Council reaffirmed the resolutions that Tikanga Māori be taught as part of each of the core subjects and Legal Ethics, and also as a standalone core subject. It agreed to an amendment proposed in the submission of the Māori law academics, allowing for more flexibility than the previous proposed wording, to the effect that 'the degree must include teaching and assessment of the general principles and practices of tikanga Māori/Māori laws and philosophy relevant to each of the core subjects'. The Council also discussed the terms of appointment of the moderators, and agreed that they would be available to engage with the Māori law academics. The Council approved a paper from

the Credits Committee with regard to the consequential effects of the proposed changes, on the rules and guidance for overseas applicants for admission.

Following the August meeting, the four moderators (Matanuku Mahuika, Dr Rawinia Higgins, Dr Rangi Mātāmua and Deputy Chief Judge Caren Fox) were appointed by the Council. The scope of their engagement was set out in a briefing paper and letter from the Council in September 2022, stating that their primary role would be to assist in the development of, and ongoing monitoring and assessment of the proposed course and changes; drafting guidelines to provide more detail than in the prescription contained in the amended Schedule to the Regulations; being available to engage with Māori academics developing the courses at the Universities, moderating exams to ensure consistency of marking, and providing reports to the Council. The Moderators met in late 2022, and also had discussions with the Māori law academics.

In early 2023, after a Preliminary Paper, they produced their First Report on 10 March on the timetable for introducing the changes, and guidance on the prescription and materials. The Report recommended a staged introduction of tikanga Māori into core subjects in 2026-2027 and of the standalone Māori Law and Philosophy course in 2027-2028, and that there be a bridging course for stage 1 law students.

Following the August 2022 meeting, the Council gave effect to the changes by agreeing upon final wording of proposed amendments to the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 2008, in particular regulations 3(1)(a) and (b), a new Reg 14 (transitional provision), and the First Schedule. In December 2022, the amendments were sent to the Minister of Justice, Hon Kiri Allan for her approval, and confirming that the implementation of the new requirements would be deferred until 1 January 2025. In January 2023, the Minister approved the proposed amendments to the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 2008

At its May 2023 meeting, the Council, after discussion, resolved to implement the changes to the Regulations as now approved by the Minister, and defer other matters recommended by the moderators for ongoing discussion. It was agreed that the Moderators' recommendations and guidelines should allow some flexibility to Law Schools in delivery, and in rolling out the changes starting with the first- and second-year subjects. It was reiterated that there were transitional Regulations such that the changes only applied to those enrolling after 1 January 2025. The Council also resolved to seek reports from the PLSC providers about its steps and thoughts on the implementation of tikanga elements in PLSC (though noting the amendments do not apply to the PLSC). The Moderators would consult further with the Law Schools prior to producing their second and final Report.

On 17 October 2023 the Moderators produced a Second and final Report. The Report contained extensive amendments to their draft guidelines, and recognized flexibility in the delivery between Law Schools. The Report also recommended further amendment to the Regulations beyond those already approved by the Minister. This Report was discussed at the Council's November meeting. The Council discussed further timing issues and their implications and practicalities for the Law Schools. It was agreed that, given the indication of Law Deans that they could meet the January 2025 date in the transitional Regulations, the amendments as approved by the Minister in January 2023 enabled law schools to achieve the implementation, given the flexibility acknowledged in the guidelines. The meeting also discussed, with the assistance of the Moderators' comments in their Second Report, how the new tikanga course and elements in existing course would be moderated in the context of the existing system of

moderation of the compulsory subjects. At the next meeting in May 2024, the Council would consider suggestions for the appointment of these moderators, likely to be two in number.

The work of the outgoing four Moderators in preparing and consulting upon their two Reports on the tikanga Māori changes and implementation was acknowledged and the Chair thanked them for their work.

At its meeting in May 2024, the Council identified two potential tikanga Māori moderators and it was agreed to seek their expression of interest prior to the Council's November meeting. At the November 2024 meeting the role and remuneration of the tikanga Māori moderators was further discussed.

The two tikanga Māori moderators were appointed as approved at the May 2025 meeting of Council.

Moderators

Moderators during the year were –

Mr D Kalderimis KC	-	Law of Contract
The Honourable Justice Edwards (until 28 July 2025)		Law of Torts
Mr I Hikaka (from 28 July 2025)		Law of Torts
The Honourable Justice Whata		Criminal Law
The Honourable Justice Palmer		Public Law
Mr T Gibbons		Property Law
Mr P Collins		Legal Ethics
The Honourable Justice Harvey		Tikanga Māori
Ms C Merrick		Tikanga Māori

Law Student Statistics

Each year the Council collects statistics from the University Law Schools. The Statistics relate to the following areas –

Graduates

These statistics detail the number of law students graduating in the following degrees as at 31 December of the relevant year.

- PhD
- Masters
- LLB (Honours)
- LLB

Enrolments

These statistics detail the number of students enrolled in various degrees for the relevant academic year.

The degrees are –

- PhD
- Masters
- LLB (Honours)
- LLB

Figures relating to numbers of students newly admitted to the first year and to the second year are also collated.

Summary of Results

These statistics relate to course results. The statistics detail the results in the Council's prescribed core law subjects for the relevant academic year.

Figures are gathered as to the number of candidates in each subject at each University, percentages passing and failing, and grades awarded.

The results statistics give a valuable insight into the numbers of students enrolled in the core courses and the distribution of grades. The graduates and enrolments statistics allow the Council to monitor the number of students enrolling in the core law degree courses, and also the number who graduate. Overall, the statistics give a picture of current trends as against previous years.

Gender and Ethnicity Statistics

In addition to statistics relating to graduates, enrolments and results, the Council also compiles gender and ethnicity statistics. Overall, the three ethnic groups that occupied the top percentages are Pākehā, Asian and Māori; female students outnumber male students.

Statistics are compiled annually and are considered at Council meetings.

Related Issues

During the year the Council, in the course of fulfilling its role in this area also advised Universities as required on a number of Council-related issues, or those relating to legal education.

Other Provision

During the year the Council (through the Institute of Professional Legal Studies) provided onsite part-distance and online taught courses, for New Zealand law graduates, and for those overseas law graduates and practitioners required to undertake it (see section 24 on the Institute of Professional Legal Studies). The Council also administered the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination for overseas graduates and practitioners required to undertake it (see section 12 on the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination).

10. ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS LAW QUALIFICATIONS

Background

The overseas qualification assessment system prescribed in the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006, and relevant Council Regulations, involves examination of the credentials of overseas law graduates and practitioners through a process of analysis and written assessment, verification of qualifications, notification and liaison with candidates and sometimes overseas universities and institutions, assistance and advice, reconsideration and reviews. It also involves reporting requirements, and preparation of material for applicants.

Applications are decided by the Council's Credits Committee which operates under delegated authority from the Council, and provides an assessment for each application.

The assessment forms the basis for eligibility for admission of overseas graduates and practitioners to the legal profession in New Zealand, upon completion of the prescribed requirements.

Applications are decided on their merits, after thorough examination of all documents, and following earlier policy and precedents established by the Council.

The assessment process involves a detailed analysis of —

- the applicant's tertiary academic qualifications;
- the nature and extent of the applicant's professional training;
- the nature and extent of the applicant's professional experience; and
- the nature and extent of the applicant's knowledge and experience in the use of the English language.

The examination requires an analysis of the extent to which the applicant's degree, training and experience equate with the admission requirements for New Zealand candidates.

In particular it is necessary to establish —

- That the applicant has completed the equivalent of the New Zealand four-year Bachelor of Laws degree (LLB) and that at least three years full-time study of law subjects has been undertaken by the applicant. If, on analysis, it is found that the applicant's degree is not in terms of length or breadth broadly the equivalent of the New Zealand law degree the applicant may be required to sit New Zealand University degree courses to broaden their degree.
- That the applicant has included in their degree and passed courses that broadly cover the principles of the compulsory Council of Legal Education New Zealand LLB subjects. Currently these subjects are Legal System, Contract, Torts, Public, Criminal, Property Law and Tikanga Māori (from 2027 for overseas applicants). (The Property Law course includes a land law, and equity and succession law component.) If the applicant has completed a course that is found to adequately correspond with any of the above subjects, the applicant may receive a credit in that subject and be required to sit the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination,

otherwise the applicant will usually be required to undertake that course at a New Zealand University.

All New Zealand law graduates who wish to be admitted to the profession must undertake a university course in legal ethics. During the assessment process it is necessary to establish whether an overseas applicant has completed a course in legal ethics and professional responsibility. Any applicant who has not completed such a course may be required to do so.

An assessment is also made of the scope of any courses or practical training that an applicant may have completed, and any related experience. If the combined practical training and experience is insufficient an applicant will be required to complete a skills-based training course. Applications are processed as expeditiously as possible. A typical application may take sixteen weeks to consider; sometimes it may be processed more quickly, or conversely a longer time may be required depending on the nature of the application, the need to clarify issues with the applicant or others, and the number of cases under consideration.

A reconsideration process is available for applicants who present new material not considered in the earlier assessment.

In late 2014, the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 2008 were amended to provide for a final review process for overseas applicants. Such applications are decided by the Chair of the Council.

Number of Applicants

The total number of applications received in 2025 was 102.

Applications were received from the following countries:

Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, China, Colombia, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Mauritius, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UK, USA and Zimbabwe.

The total number of applications received since 1998 are listed in the table below:

Year	Applications
1998	67
1999	71
2000	85
2001	101
2002	124
2003	123
2004	99
2005	123
2006	109
2007	85
2008	135

2009	117
2010	101
2011	106
2012	117
2013	94
2014	95
2015	95
2016	126
2017	149
2018	123
2019	158
2020	99
2021	100
2022	135
2023	125
2024	123
2025	102

Applicant Database

During the year the Chief Executive’s Office continued to maintain a comprehensive confidential database of all applicants, together with information on their academic qualifications, and practical training and experience, in order to preserve consistency in the assessments.

Inquiries

During the year the Chief Executive’s Office handled numerous inquiries from applicants and potential applicants for assessment of their qualifications, and related general inquiries.

Completion Certificates

During the year, the Chief Executive’s Office continued during the year to issue certificates of completion to overseas graduates and law practitioners who completed the Council’s prescribed requirements. 61 completion certificate applications were received from overseas graduates and practitioners in 2025. All these applications were processed and certificates were sent out in 2025.

11. INTERNAL CREDITS

Background

This area is specific to overseas undergraduates. When an overseas graduate or admitted practitioner applies to the Council to have an overseas qualification assessed, the Council examines the core law degree subjects undertaken by that person. If that person's degree subject is found to adequately cover the common law principles in the subject, the applicant is given a credit in that particular subject. However the applicant will almost certainly have to undertake the Council's New Zealand Law and Practice Examination in the corresponding Part, which tests understanding of the New Zealand law. It is rare for any exemptions to be granted from the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination.

However, if an applicant has not graduated overseas, but has partially completed an overseas law degree, and wishes to enter the profession in New Zealand, or to obtain a law degree here, the applicant will proceed to a University in New Zealand, enrol in an LLB degree, and seek credit in any relevant subjects, which may include the core law subjects.

Historically, a potential difficulty arose because if the Universities granted degree credit in the core law subjects without any further requirements being imposed, those undergraduates who commenced their undergraduate degree overseas, but transferred, or wished to transfer to a New Zealand LLB degree, were significantly advantaged over their graduate/admitted compatriots, who would have to undertake the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination prescribed by the Council. From the Council's standpoint there was also a public interest concern in that those undergraduate students had at no stage studied or been assessed in New Zealand law in these core law subjects.

Similar considerations applied to students seeking to undertake core law courses on an exchange programme. In those cases students might obtain passes in the equivalent core law subjects overseas, but not be required to undertake any further study in the area in New Zealand.

As a result of these potential inconsistencies, a Protocol was drafted in 2002, by the Chief Executive's Office and the Law Deans, as a joint initiative between the Council and the Law Schools. The Protocol, entitled the *Protocol between the Council and the Universities on Internal Credits*, was designed to remedy any inconsistencies in processes, by establishing a standard procedure to be followed in internal credit cases.

The Protocol

The Protocol encourages the Law Schools to seek a recommendation from the Council as to the credit to be given in core law subjects in respect of –

- students presenting with a course from an overseas country or jurisdiction in substitution for any core law course;
- students seeking to undertake a course at an overseas institution and to substitute that course for a core law course through an Exchange Programme.

The Council's recommendation may include requiring the applicant to complete the corresponding Part of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination.

The Protocol came into effect on 1 April 2003. Since then the Council has regularly provided recommendations for a number of applications from the Law Schools, and to those applicants who have not yet approached a Law School, but have chosen to come directly to the Council.

12. EXAMINATION IN NEW ZEALAND LAW AND PRACTICE

Background

The Council requires almost all overseas applicants who have been given credits for the core law subjects to pass all, or a number of Parts, of an examination on the law of New Zealand – the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination.

The Examination consists of a six-Part written examination following a comprehensive self-taught prescription. It is generally held bi-annually, over a period of four days. The purpose of the Examination is to test the applicant's knowledge of the distinct features of the New Zealand law, and proceeds on the basis that the applicant will already have an understanding of the common law principles in that subject, by virtue of the applicant's overseas law degree.

The Examination covers the areas of Legal System (equivalent to Public Law), Contract Law, Criminal Law, Property Law, Torts, and Equity and Succession. Each Part consists of one written examination of 90 minutes duration.

The examiners are generally Law Faculty professors and lecturers who specialise in the above subjects. The Examination may be sat at any of the six New Zealand University Law Schools.

During the reporting period, the Council –

- administered and conducted Examinations in July and November.
- appointed an independent moderator and assessor to report on the Examination;
- operated an appeal system within the confines of the Council's regulations for the conduct of the Examination, which provided for aegrotat, compassionate and compensation passes in appropriate circumstances;
- updated the Prescription for the Examination for use in 2025.

In 2025 the exams were held at the NZ law schools, and one other overseas location (UK). In 2025, as in the preceding year, the UK location, for July and November sittings, was Queen Mary University, London.

Staff

The examiners during the year were –

Part I	Dr Grant Morris, Law Faculty, VUW
Part II	Associate Professor Paul Scott, Law Faculty, VUW
Part III	Professor Elisabeth McDonald, Law Faculty, Canterbury
Part IV	Dr Ruiping Ye, Law Faculty, VUW
Part V	Dr Steven Price, Law Faculty, VUW
Part VI	Dr Mark Bennett, Law Faculty, VUW

The moderator/assessor for the course was The Right Honourable Sir Andrew Tipping.

Statistical Data for the Examination

Month	Year	Number of Candidates	Number of Parts
February	1997	20	40
July	1997	47	140
February	1998	51	116
July	1998	49	127
February	1999	54	125
July	1999	61	124
February	2000	46	105
July	2000	46	128
February	2001	43	97
July	2001	51	116
February	2002	48	116
July	2002	47	112
February	2003	72	159
July	2003	68	174
February	2004	74	152
July	2004	81	211
February	2005	79	181
July	2005	72	140
February	2006	82	206
July	2006	101	222
February	2007	86	171
July	2007	89	192
February	2008	78	155
July	2008	80	188
February	2009	99	204
July	2009	99	205
February	2010	100	220
July	2010	87	210
February	2011	103	241
July	2011	87	224
February	2012	74	164
July	2012	90	218
February	2013	78	192
July	2013	86	214
February	2014	86	184
July	2014	77	178
February	2015	72	163
July	2015	80	192
February	2016	81	200

July	2016	91	210
February	2017	90	214
July	2017	101	253
February	2018	98	233
July	2018	113	257
February	2019	119	267
July	2019	123	273
February	2020	119	267
November	2020	97	200
March & April	2021	105	181
November	2021	123	224
July	2022	135	269
November	2022	124	230
July	2023	121	210
November	2023	116	195
July	2024	110	210
November	2024	100	188
July	2025	106	204
November	2025	104	181

The following tables detail the registration statistics for the July and November Examinations during the year.

July Sitting

Of the prospective candidates who requested information from the Examination Administrator regarding the July 2025 Examination sitting:

- 109 registered for a total of 214 Parts. After 3 candidates withdrew, this left 106 candidates, who sat 204 Parts.

Table – Candidates by Parts

	Part I	Part II	Part III	Part IV	Part V	Part VI	Total
Candidates	47	37	49	28	35	18	204

November Sitting

Of the candidates who requested information from the Examination Administrator regarding the November 2025 Examination sitting:

- 112 registered for a total of 199 Parts. After withdrawals or deferrals of one or more parts, this left 104, who sat 181 Parts.

Table – Candidates by Parts:

	Part I	Part II	Part III	Part IV	Part V	Part VI	Total
Candidates	44	34	48	19	36	18	181

13. EXEMPTIONS

During the year the Council, through the Chief Executive's Office, implemented systems to deal with applications for exemptions from certain Council requirements on the basis of equivalent training. These include exemptions in relation to the Professional Legal Studies Course in regard to applicants who held equivalent skills-based training qualifications from other countries.

14. COMPLAINT TO REGULATIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE ABOUT PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS IN LAW (TIKANGA MAORI REQUIREMENTS) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS

On 17 April 2024 Gary Judd KC made a complaint to the Regulations Review Committee (RRC) about the Regulations. The complaint alleged that these Regulations should be drawn to the attention of the House under Standing Orders of the House of Representatives 327(2)(a), (b) and (c) and "other matters" concerning presentation of the Regulations to the House by the relevant Minister.

The Council responded with a submission to the RRC on 2 July 2024. Other submissions were made which supported the Regulations, including from New Zealand Law Society and New Zealand Law Students' Association.

The Council later, at the request of the RRC made a supplementary submission in response to a subsequent complaint in relation to the same matter, made by Thomas Newman, an Auckland barrister. In October the Chair and Chief Executive attended a RRC meeting, at which Mr Judd and Mr Newman also presented.

On 4 April 2025 the RRC reported on the complaint. A majority expressed the view that an aspect of the Regulations should be disallowed.

The partial disallowance of the Regulations took effect in May 2025. The Council's November 2025 meeting approved the further amendment of the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations to reflect the partial disallowance of the Amendment Regulations, affecting the amendment in relation to the teaching of tikanga Māori as relevant to the core law subjects.

15. COMPLAINT TO REGULATIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE ABOUT TRANS-TASMAN MUTUAL RECOGNITION ADMISSION REGULATIONS 2008

The Regulations Review Committee (RRC) received a complaint in March 2024 from Mr Timothy Little. (These Regulations derive from the Council, and provide for the administration of the TTMRA regime within that legislation. The administration of the TTMRA applications from Australia, is done by the two local registration authorities under the Act, namely the High Court of New Zealand, and the New Zealand Law Society).

Mr Little challenged the Regulations on a number of bases. The Council made a detailed submission in response, on 11 April 2024. In August, the RRC asked the Council to respond on one aspect of the complaint, and advised that it had decided only to investigate that aspect of the complaint. The Council responded on 13 September 2024. The RRC informed the Council that they intended to have a further hearing in November. Mr Little subsequently indicated in a

further submission to the RRC that he did not wish to make any further appearance. No November hearing took place.

The RRC released an interim report on 4 April 2025. The Report recommended that before the RRC issued a final report, the Council should make amendments to the Regulations, to the effect indicated and agreed by the Council in its submissions and hearings before the RRC, to clarify the effect of the Regulations in relation to Australian practising certificates. The Council's draft amendments were subsequently approved by the RRC, and then after consultation with relevant stakeholders by the Council, at the November 2025 Council meeting, the finalized amendments were approved to be sent to the Minister of Justice for approval.

16. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE UK-REGULATORY SERVICES DIALOGUE

The Free Trade Agreement between UK and New Zealand provides for a Regulatory Legal Services Dialogue to commence by May 2025. The scope includes discussion on educational qualifications and training for lawyers. In 2024 a preliminary discussion was held among the NZ participants, the Council, New Zealand Law Society, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

In 2025 two online meetings of the Regulatory Services Dialogue participants from the UK (and from New Zealand, the New Zealand Law Society, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Council) were held in May and November. The initial meeting was introductory, and the second meeting discussed some potential future agenda issues and clarified questions from an exchange of information that had occurred since the May meeting. The next meeting was proposed to be held in March 2026.

A corresponding dialogue is progressing between Australia and the UK.

17. ADVICE TO UNIVERSITY COUNCILS

The Council may tender advice to University Councils on any matter relating to legal education.

18. MINISTERIAL ADVICE

The Council may provide advice to the Minister of Justice (if required) on any matter relating to legal education. No advice was required in 2025.

19. INQUIRIES

During the year the Chief Executive's Office continued to respond to numerous inquiries related to its areas of operation. The inquiries emanated from a diverse and large group of bodies and individuals. Such bodies ranged from Government departments requesting information, to general student and applicant inquiries.

20. COMPLETION CERTIFICATE SYSTEM

Background

As from 1 August 2008, the Council became responsible for issuing completion certificates to New Zealand law graduates who have fulfilled the Council's prescribed requirements for admission to the profession.

Certificates Issued

During the year the Council received 1,358 completion certificate applications from New Zealand law graduates. 1,343 candidates were issued a completion certificate in 2025 and 15 are pending at the time of preparation of this report. All completion certificates are issued after stringent verification.

21. **EXTERNAL LIAISON**

The Council continued to liaise externally and as required with the following bodies –

The Judiciary

The Chief Justice
The Chief District Court Judge
Registries of the High Court

The Profession

The New Zealand Law Society
NZLS President
NZLS Executive Director and Senior Staff
NZLS Registry
NZLS Branches
The Law Association
Law firms as appropriate

Academia

Law Staff
University Administrators
University Management
University Students
University Bodies (e. g Universities New Zealand)

Government Departments and Agencies

Public Service Commission
Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Attorney-General's Office
Department of Internal Affairs
Immigration New Zealand
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
Ministry of Education
Crown Law Office
Office of the Controller and Auditor General
New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Tertiary Education Commission

Government Ministers

Minister of Justice
Attorney-General

The Public

Public (applicants, candidates, general inquiries)
News Media

Well Being Services

Vitae Workplace Support Psychotherapists, Counsellors and trauma response team

General

Accountants

Insurance personnel

Legal Advisers

IT Advisers

Verification Authority

College of Law

Australian Law Admissions Consultative Committee, and Legal Services Council

Australian Admission Authorities

Australian Productivity Commission (on TTMRA)

22. FEES

During the year the Council –

- Set at \$1,720 (exclusive of Goods and Services Tax) the fee charged to overseas law graduates for assessment of applications for credits, and set at \$2,076 (exclusive of Goods and Services Tax) the fee charged to overseas practising lawyers.
- In accordance with its user-pays policy set the entry fee for each Part of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination at \$798 (exclusive of Goods and Services Tax), and prescribed fees for the various concession (aegrotat, compassionate and compensation) passes.
- Set the fee for the Professional Legal Studies Course offered by the Institute of Professional Legal Studies.
- Set the fee for NZ graduates' certificates of completion at \$198 (inclusive of Goods and Services Tax).

23. PROFESSIONAL LEGAL STUDIES COURSE

Provision

The Council is also responsible for providing practical legal training for New Zealand law graduates, and overseas graduates and practitioners as required.

In 1986 a review commissioned by the Council of Legal Education and the New Zealand Law Society⁷ recommended the establishment of a full-time practical skills-based training course which would complement the experience which a law graduate gained while working in a legal environment, and would replace the fifth professional year at university where students had previously been trained in practically oriented legal subjects.

In order to provide the course the Council established the Institute of Professional Legal Studies in 1987.

⁷ N Gold *Report on the Reform of Professional Legal Training in New Zealand for the New Zealand Law Society and the Council of Legal Education* (Wellington, 1987).

Institute of Professional Legal Studies

The Institute is the Council's provider arm for the delivery of the Professional Legal Studies Course. The Council has a statutory duty to arrange the provision of such a course, and must ensure that it has the ability to do so to ensure that the course is accessible to all students.

The Institute is managed by a National Director, responsible to the Chief Executive of the Council. A Delegation Document has been in place since 2003 under which the National Director operates and reports to the Chief Executive of the Council.⁸

Re-Accreditation and Monitoring Exercises

Under the Professional Legal Studies Course Accreditation Regulations 2006, every third year providers must re-apply for accreditation to deliver the course. At its November 2023 meeting, the Council had resolved to renew the accreditation of both IPLS and College of Law New Zealand for a further three years.

At its November 2025 meeting, the Council approved a proposal for an adjusted schedule of accreditation and monitoring, extending the period of renewed accreditation to recognise that both providers have been delivering the course for many years, that the course and the providers are now on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework, and that the New Zealand Qualifications Authority regular review process will commence in late 2027 in respect of a February 2028 Review.

Listing of the PLSC as a qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credits Framework

Changes to funding of the Professional Legal Studies Course were introduced in 2022 pursuant to the Education and Training Act 2020. These would have impacted on students' ability to continue to access student loans and allowances to undertake the PLSC, by virtue of the course, which had previously been treated as a private training scheme, being deemed to be a micro-credential, pending review or a change of its status. Micro-credentials, which are currently up to 40 credits, are not eligible for student loans. Moreover, micro-credentials are subject to a \$60 fee limit per credit unit.

At the end of 2022 the Tertiary Education Commission notified the PLSC providers about these changes. While it was the intention of the New Zealand Qualifications Agency that it would review those few 'deemed' micro-credentials over the next three years, (and the fee limit would not apply to deemed micro-credentials during the review period unless the provider sought to increase its fees) the possibility of the PLSC becoming a micro-credential post-review would have major implications for the PLSC and thus for its two current providers, College of Law NZ and IPLS.

In early 2023 the Council engaged with the TEC and NZQA and as a result, identified the process whereby the PLSC programme could become approved as a 'Qualification' listed on

⁸ *Statement of Accountability Relationship Between the Council of Legal Education and the Institute of Professional Legal Studies* (Wellington, 2002).

the New Zealand Qualifications and Credit Framework, and the providers then apply to be accredited to deliver that programme. Such ‘Qualifications’ qualify for student loan funding such that, if approved by NZQA, such funding could continue to be accessed by students beyond 2024.

During the second half of 2023, the Council worked with the providers (IPLS and the College of Law) and other stakeholders, through Ringa Hora, the prescribed Workforce Development Council, to develop the PLSC as a Qualification. In December 2023 the application for approval of the programme was lodged with NZQA. The Qualification was approved by NZQA and listed on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credits Framework in February 2024. In 2024, both the current providers applied for accreditation and were accredited by NZQA to deliver the Qualification.

In 2025, the Government announced, after consultation, that Workforce Development Councils would be replaced by Industry Skills Bodies. The Council made submissions to two stages of the consultation exercise, and engaged with the Tertiary Education Commission and the two providers of the PLSC, as to the impact of this and related changes, due to be effective from January 2026. The Council continued to monitor the implementation of the changes.

24. THE WORK OF THE INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL LEGAL STUDIES IN 2025

The Institute of Professional Legal Studies (IPLS) is a committee of the Council of Legal Education. It has financial and reporting responsibilities as a section of the Council’s activities. It is maintained as a separate cost and activity centre within the Council’s operations.

National Director of IPLS

The National Director of the Institute is Ms Bernadette Wilson.

Work of IPLS

IPLS, as part of the New Zealand Council of Legal Education, offers the Professional Legal Studies Course (PLSC) to eligible law graduates. The course is taken following completion of the LLB degree and is a prerequisite for admission to practice as a barrister and solicitor.

IPLS currently offers the following course options:

- 13-week onsite (Auckland & Wellington)
- 13-week blended online and face-to-face (with virtual meetings via Teams).
- 18-week blended online and face-to-face (with virtual meetings via Teams) - weekdays.
- 18-week blended online and face-to-face (with virtual meetings via Teams) - evenings/Saturday.

The content of the course complies with Regulation 3(2)(b) of the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 2008. This Regulation lists Professional Conduct and eleven skills. As required by the Regulation, these skills are taught in the context of legal transactions commonly undertaken by newly admitted lawyers.

Funding and Accommodation of IPLS

IPLS is required by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to be registered with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) as a Private Training Establishment (PTE). In 2021, NZQA awarded IPLS a **statement of High Confidence** in both educational performance and organisational capability in self-assessment. This recognition was part of the External Evaluation and Review (EER) process, which has since been discontinued. IPLS retains its 2021 status.

In 2024, NZQA officially approved IPLS as a provider of the Professional Legal Skills Course (PLSC) as a qualification under the NZQA framework. The PLSC is known as the New Zealand Certificate in Professional Legal Skills. All trainees who started Profs with IPLS from 1 September 2024 became eligible for the new qualification and their Profs qualification will be recorded on their NZQA record of learning.

IPLS receives Student Achievement Component (SAC) funding from the TEC. SAC funding enables IPLS to be eligible for trainee access to student loans and allowances. The 2025 course fee was \$5,805 (GST inclusive) for NZ residents (the same as 2024) and \$7,310 (GST inclusive) for international students.

IPLS Onsite Premises in 2025

Auckland Level 7, 120 Albert Street, Auckland Central 1010

Wellington Urban Hub serviced offices Level 2, 318 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6011

Compliance Activities in 2025

Compliance projects undertaken or commenced in 2025 include:

1. Single Data Return for MoE – January, March, April, August 2025
2. 2024 Workforce Questionnaire for MoE – January 2025
3. Monitoring Report for NZCLE – January 2025
4. Legal Compliance report– January 2025.
5. NZCLE Annual Report – March 2025
6. NZCLE Quarterly reports - March, June, September and December 2025
7. Fee Protect Audit (Ernst and Young) – March/April 2025
8. Audit of the IPLS 2024 annual financial statements - April/May 2025
9. TEC financial viability report (including Prudential Financial Standards report, Moore Markhams Agreed Upon Procedures Report, 2024 Audit Report, 2024 Audited Financial Statements) – May 2025
10. NZQA Annual Fee form – May 2025
11. NZQA PTE Annual Declaration form – May 2025
12. Educational Performance Indicator Commitments (EPIC's) for 2026, 2027 and 2028 submitted to TEC - June 2025
13. Mix of Provision (MoP) for 2026 funding for TEC – July 2025
14. 2025 Revised Budget – August 2025
15. NZQA External Evaluation and Review (EER) self-assessment – August 2025
16. 2026 Financial Forecasts – September 2025
17. November meeting report for NZCLE – October 2025
18. NZQA Self-Review Attestation for the Pastoral Care Code – 1 November 2025

Liaison with Profession

- IPLS regularly meets with members of the profession to discuss their needs and expectations of new graduates entering the profession and expectations while their law graduates are on our course
- IPLS works closely with members of the profession to deliver events at universities
- IPLS consults with members of the profession to review course content to ensure our materials remain current and relevant
- IPLS engages members of the profession to serve as external moderators

Trainee Evaluations

IPLS operates an anonymous online survey to evaluate trainee learning experiences. Combined with other information such as grade outcomes, this feedback is considered for course improvements, to monitor adjustments, and to guide professional development.

25. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES POLICY AND PROGRAMME

In 2005 the Council amended its EEO Policy to accord with current best practice. The Council used as guidance the State Services Commission ‘Public Services Commitment to EEO to 2010’ policy.

A copy of the Policy is reproduced below.

CLE Policy on Equal Employment Opportunities

1. The Council of Legal Education endorses the principles and practice of Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) and is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all potential and current employees, focusing on merit.
2. In accordance with legislation and EEO principles, the Council recruits, promotes and evaluates all employees without unfair discrimination, (including but not limited to discrimination on grounds of sex, marital status, religious or ethical belief, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, political opinion, employment status, family status, sexual orientation) save where any such characteristic is relevant to the qualifications for a particular employment position and is lawful discrimination.
3. The Council is committed, through this Policy, to recognising the aims and aspirations of Māori and the need for greater involvement of Māori as employees of the Council.
4. This Policy will apply to all aspects of employee relations, policies, procedures and practices. The Council’s human resource policies, practices and procedures will seek to identify and eliminate any direct, indirect, or institutional, discriminatory barriers to the ability of individual employees to be recognised, rewarded, advanced or supported on their merits.
5. This Policy is a dynamic document and all policies, procedures and practices of the Council, and this Policy itself, will be regularly reviewed to ensure continuing compliance with best EEO employment practice.
6. Consultation and participation are good employment practice and the Council will ensure that employees are consulted in the ongoing development and implementation of this Policy and the Council’s EEO Programme.

The policy and EEO programme were adhered to in 2025, with no outstanding issues.

26. HUMAN RESOURCES

The NZCLE sees Human Resources as an essential part of its core function in order to ensure the highest quality work is carried out at all levels of the organisation. The HR strategy includes recruitment, retention and employee engagement plans to enable a positive work environment which encourages employee participation, professional development and job satisfactions. The HR contribution continues to evolve and in 2025 the main focus was on health and safety and wellbeing, change management, employee relations and professional development.

27. HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

The Council has developed a robust health and safety policy and procedures in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and these are reviewed to ensure compliance at all times. Premises where the Council has responsibility for employees are checked for the purposes of health and safety and procedures are in place to report on the key responsibilities outlined in the policy.

An Employee Wellbeing policy (EAP) is in place for employees and all workers are encouraged to access personal support at any time.

The Council receives Health and Safety at Work reports at its Council meetings and reviews its risk mitigation strategy to address any compliance issues which may be identified from the reports. The primary duties of the Council are detailed in the health and safety policy and an implementation plan is in place for the provision and maintenance of a work environment that is without risk to health and safety.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 required the Council to create a health and safety policy setting out its obligations as a “PCBU” (a person conducting a business or undertaking) under the Act.

The Council is required to ensure so far as “reasonably practicable” the health and safety of workers while at work with the Council and exercise due diligence in order that the Council complies with its obligations. Workers also have an obligation to take reasonable care of their own health and safety while at work and systems and procedures have been introduced to ensure all employees of the Council are aware of these obligations.

The Council considers a Health and Safety at Work report at each Council meeting. This ensures the NZCLE Health and Safety policy and procedures continue to be in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

The Council has implemented a robust HSW policy, and procedures are in place to address and report on key responsibilities outlined in the policy. These responsibilities are broadly related to:

- Incidents and accidents and notified events
- Prevention of injury
- Work and non-work related activity causing injury or incapacity
- Risk and hazard
- Physical environment, psychological and stress related issues

The Council has developed a risk mitigation strategy to ensure all compliance issues are identified and addressed.

The Council reviewed its policies and procedures related to sexual harassment, workplace bullying, stress and wellbeing and has provided the opportunity for employees to access professional employee support services where needed. The policy and procedures acknowledge the importance of employee wellbeing and outlines the Council's commitment to ensuring a healthy workplace culture.

28. **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

In 2025, the Council met its on-going financial requirements and reporting requirements under the Crown Entities Act 2004 as if it was a Crown entity by having its financial statements, including performance measures, audited by Moore Markhams Wellington Audit, on behalf of the Controller and Auditor General, and by submitting its thirty-third report to the Minister of Justice in respect of the approved reporting period of 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

29. **GOVERNING LEGISLATION**

The Council's governing legislation is the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006 (Part 8), and the Council operates under the following Council Regulations –

- the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 2008;
- the Conduct of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination Regulations 1996;
- the Professional Legal Studies Course Accreditation Regulations 2006;
- the Professional Legal Studies Course Assessment and Standards Regulations 2002;
- the Professional Legal Studies Course Regulations 2004;
- the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Regulations 2008.

The first set of Regulations update the earlier Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 1987, to take account of the Council's expanded role under the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006.

The last set of Regulations were made to give effect to the Council's role under the 2006 Act in relation to recognition of qualifications for the purposes of the principles set out in section 15 of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1996.

30. **FUNDING**

The Council has continued to maintain, as largely self-funding activities, its functions in relation to the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination, and the assessment of applications from law graduates and practitioners for entry into the New Zealand profession. Funding was also received pursuant to the statutory levy imposed on practitioners under the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006.

31. **COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

The following main Committees operated during this year –

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Council (Chair)
The Honourable Justice K Tahana
University of Otago Dean
The Chief Executive

Key Role

To deal with Council and Institute business arising between Council meetings, or which does not require referral to the full Council.

CREDITS COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Council
The Right Honourable Sir Andrew Tipping
Professor M Henaghan (Auckland University)
Mr David Brown, Credits Consultant, NZCLE
The Chief Executive

Key Role

To review recommendations relating to applications for assessment, and to advise on matters relating to overseas qualifications.

**STATEMENT OF NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION
STAFF RESOURCES FOR YEAR ENDED 2025**

The Council	Full time	Part-Time
Chief Executive	1	
EA to the CEO and NZLPE Administrator		1
Administrator		1
Senior Manager		1
Overseas Admission Administrator		1
Completion Certificate Co-ordinator		1
Credits Consultant		1
Academic Adviser Overseas Admissions		1
NZLPE Academic Co-ordinator and Academic Adviser		2
NZLPE Manager		1
Policy Advisers		3
University Moderators		8
HR and Health and Safety Manager		1
New Zealand Law and Practice Examiners.....		6
New Zealand Law and Practice Examination Moderator/Assessor		1

THE INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL LEGAL STUDIES

Role	Full-time	Part-time or Casual
National Director	1	
Head of Marketing and Communications	1	
Compliance Manager	1	
Finance Manager	1	
Learning Experience Manager	1	
Trainee Services Coordinator	1	
Learning Management Systems Manager	1 (contract)	
Accounts Administrator		2
Communications Coordinator (future students) (part year)		1
Communications Coordinator (employers/alumni) (part year)		1
IT Manager		1 (contract)
Instructors		21 (contract casual)

New Zealand Council of Legal Education
Statement of Performance
For the Year Ended 31 December 2025

- 1 This Statement of Performance sets out the performance of the New Zealand Council of Legal Education (“**Council**”) against the key outputs arising from its functions, as set out in the Council’s Statement of Performance Expectations for the 2025 financial year (“**SPE**”).
- 2 The Statement forms part of the Council’s Annual Report.

AUTHORITY

- 3 The Council is an independent statutory body with continued existence established under the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006 (“**the Act**”).
- 4 Under section 273(5) of the Act, sections 153 to 156 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 apply to the Council as if it were a Crown entity within the meaning of the Crown Entities Act 2004.
- 5 Accordingly this Statement of Performance is prepared by the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

COUNCIL’S FUNCTIONS

- 6 Under s 274 of the Act the Council has the following functions:
 - (a) subject to this Act, to set the qualification and educational requirements for candidates for admission as barristers and solicitors of the High Court:
 - (b) subject to this Act, to define, prescribe, and approve, from time to time and as it thinks fit, the courses of study required to be undertaken by candidates for admission as barristers and solicitors:
 - (c) to arrange for the delivery of the courses of study referred to in paragraph (b) or to provide those courses where necessary:
 - (d) to deliver courses of study in practical legal training for candidates for admission as barristers and solicitors or to license other persons to deliver those courses:
 - (e) to arrange for the courses of study referred to in paragraph (b) to be monitored and assessed:
 - (f) to prescribe, in relation to the admission of barristers and solicitors, mechanisms and criteria for —
 - (i) the recognition of foreign qualifications, registration, and experience; and

- (ii) the recognition of qualifications for the purposes of the principle set out in section 15 of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997:
- (g) to tender advice to the council of any university on any matter relating to legal education:
- (h) to inquire into, consider, and report to the Minister on any matter relating to legal education as the Minister may, from time to time, require.

OUTCOMES

- 7 The Council regulates qualification and educational requirements for candidates for admission as barristers and solicitors of the High Court. The Council aims to ensure, as a key outcome, that only properly qualified and educated candidates are admitted as barristers and solicitors of the High Court in New Zealand.
- 8 This includes ensuring that those candidates have knowledge of key areas of law including by prescribing compulsory subjects of study (for example contract, public, criminal and property law) and other essential courses that will equip candidates in their future legal practice such as legal ethics.
- 9 The Council can also define, prescribe and approve courses of study to be undertaken by candidates. The Council is constantly ensuring these prescribed and approved courses are fit for purpose and achieve the goal of equipping candidates for legal practice.
- 10 The Council also directly provides practical legal training and assesses foreign qualifications of candidates seeking admission in New Zealand after training overseas.
- 11 The purpose of all of the Council's functions and services is to ensure that only well-educated, qualified and prepared candidates are eligible to be admitted as barristers and solicitors of the High Court in New Zealand. This purpose in turn supports the overall strategic goal of promoting and preserving the integrity and quality of the legal profession of New Zealand as a whole.
- 12 The Council also ensures that the educational and qualification requirements it prescribes are updated from time to time as necessary to ensure they are fit for purpose and support achieving the purpose as set out above.

OUTPUT CLASS

- 13 The Council has one reportable output class: the regulation of pre-admission legal education in New Zealand.

The three key services involved are:

- The assessment of overseas law qualifications;
- The provision of a bi-annual New Zealand Law and Practice Examination ("NZLPE") for overseas law graduates; and

- The provision of practical legal training for candidates for admission through the Council’s provider arm, the Institute of Professional Legal Studies (“IPLS”).
- 14 The Council’s financial statements set out the revenue earned and expenses incurred for the reportable output.
 - 15 The assessment of overseas law qualifications and the NZLPE act as a checkpoint for overseas law graduates, before they become candidates for admission in New Zealand, and ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to practise law in New Zealand before they are eligible for admission.
 - 16 The IPLS continues to provide practical legal training to upskill candidates for admission, so that candidates have adequate practical training prior to their admission.
 - 17 Together all of these outputs work together to achieve the outcome of ensuring only well-educated, qualified and prepared candidates are eligible for admission as barristers and solicitors of the High Court in New Zealand. This then promotes and preserves the integrity of the legal profession in New Zealand as a whole.
 - 18 The Council is also constantly reviewing, considering and updating these requirements to keep pace with the changing world. Recent examples of this are the Council’s work on the incorporation of Te Ao Māori concepts including tikanga in each of the core law subjects, the introduction of a new core course on tikanga, and the consideration of the proposal by the University of Auckland to offer a postgraduate law degree in the form of the Juris Doctor alongside the longstanding LLB (which is offered as an undergraduate law degree).

KEY SERVICES 1 AND 2: ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS LAW QUALIFICATIONS AND PROVISION OF NZLPE

- 19 These services refer to the requirement of those who would like to practise law in New Zealand who hold a law degree or a practising certificate from a foreign jurisdiction. This class is intended to ensure that the highest standards of competence are maintained for persons who wish to practise law in New Zealand and do not hold a domestic qualification.

Performance in these services was measured by the extent to which the Council assessed overseas qualifications, and delivered the twice yearly examination.

SERVICE	QUANTITY		QUALITY		TIMELINESS	
	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual
Key Service 1 - Assessment of Overseas Qualifications						
Administration and consideration of applications from overseas law graduates for assessment of their qualifications for the purpose of admission to the profession in New Zealand.	The Council estimated that 99 (2024: 90) applications would be received.	The Council received 102 (2024: 123) applications.	For all applications the Council will proceed through the designated process as prescribed by the Professional Examinations in Law Regulations 2008.	The Council administered all applications pursuant to the Regulations.	All applications will be determined within 16 (2024: 16) working weeks.	100% of successful applicants were provided with determinations on their applications within 16 (2024: 16) working weeks. ¹

¹ Complete applications does not include applications which have inadequate documentation or are delayed by overseas verification issues.

SERVICE	QUANTITY		QUALITY		TIMELINESS	
	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual
Key Service 2 - Provision of Bi-annual Examination						
Setting and administering a six-part examination in New Zealand law and practice twice a year for those overseas applicants who are required to take some or all of its parts for the purpose of admission to the profession in New Zealand.	Approximately 315 (2024: 375) exam parts were anticipated to be sat at two exams.	181 (2024: 210 –) exam parts were sat at the July 2025 exams, and 204 (2024: 188) exam parts were sat at the November 2025 exam. ²	Hold an examination twice yearly in accordance with the Conduct of the New Zealand Law and Practice Examination Regulations 1996. Examination papers are moderated by an independent assessor. Examination is to be fair, secure, rigorous, accurate and up-to-date	Standard 100% (2024: 100%) per achieved.	Examination results are to be released within 50 working days of the exam.	The July Examination results were released within 41 working days (2024: 39 –) after the exams. The November Examination results were released within 36 (2024: 36) working days of the exams, taking into account the Christmas closure period (19/12/2025-12/1/26).

KEY SERVICE 3: PROVISION OF PRACTICAL LEGAL TRAINING THROUGH IPLS

- 20 The Council regulates the provision of professional legal education prior to admission as a barrister and solicitor for persons in New Zealand. This role includes the provision of a professional legal studies course (“PLSC”) through the Council’s provider arm, the Institute of Professional Legal Studies (“IPLS”).
- 21 The key service is intended to ensure that the highest standards of education are maintained in the provision of professional legal studies for persons who wish to be admitted to the bar.

22 Performance of this key service was assessed by the extent to which the Council monitored PLSC providers, re-accredited PLSC providers and monitored IPLS with regulations and in a manner which complied with the forecasts below for timeliness and quality.

SERVICE	QUANTITY		QUALITY		TIMELINES	
	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual
Key service 3 – Provision of Practical Legal Training through IPLS						
Delivering a professional legal studies course through the Council’s provider arm, the Institute of Professional Legal Studies.	<p>The Council estimated the following: 580 (2024: 570) anticipated trainees;</p> <p>1 monitor appointed to review each year that is not a re-accreditation year;</p> <p>12 monthly financial statements to be submitted by IPLS;</p> <p>4 quarterly management reports to be submitted by IPLS;</p> <p>and Completion rates - All students 95% Māori 95% Pasifika 95%</p>	<p>The Council’s actual number of trainees was 586 (2024: 573).</p> <p>Monitors were appointed.</p> <p>The Council received 12 financial statements and 4 quarterly management reports from IPLS.</p> <p>99% (2024: 99.5) 97.7% (2024: 100%) 100% (2024: 100%)</p>	<p>The professional Legal Studies Course at IPLS is run in accordance with the Professional Legal Studies Course Accreditation Regulations 2006.</p>	<p>Standard 100% per cent achieved.</p>	<p>Quarterly reports submitted: March, June, September and December.</p> <p>Financial statements submitted by the end of the month following submission of reports.</p>	<p>All reports were submitted by the due date.</p> <p>The financial statements were all submitted by the end of the month following the submission of the reports.</p> <p>Standard 100% achieved.</p>