



From The Honorary Secretary
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Response of the Society of Legal Scholars to the Draft Business Plan 2010/11 of the Legal Services Board

1. The Society of Legal Scholars is a learned society whose members teach law in a University or similar institution or who are otherwise engaged in legal scholarship. Founded in 1909, and with over 3,000 members, it is the oldest as well as the largest learned society in the field. The great majority of members of the Society are legal academics in Universities, although members of the senior judiciary and members of the legal professions also participate regularly in its work. The Society's membership is drawn from all jurisdictions in the British Isles and also includes some affiliated members typically working in other common law systems. The Society is the principal representative body for legal academics in the UK as well as one of the larger learned societies in arts, humanities and social science.
2. The Society welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Business Plan and the open and co-operative approach which, as with the plan for 2009/10, it espouses.
3. We welcome the intention to develop strong working relationships with stakeholders, including the academic community (para 8). This has already been shown in meetings held by officers of the Board to discuss the research programme, and the meeting with education providers on 12 January 2010 to discuss diversity issues. We look forward to hearing the Board's views as to arrangements for future meetings with education providers. Possibilities include an annual meeting with representatives of the Law Subject Associations to review developments, and larger meetings convened as required to consider particular topics or themes.
4. We also welcome the continued emphasis throughout the plan on the importance of the need for the Board's actions to be based on research evidence.
5. It would be helpful to know more about the mechanism that will be employed to produce the single source map of qualification routes (p 26).
6. It is stated at para 70 that there must be defined outcome measures linked to initiatives to promote diversity and social mobility, with a shift of emphasis from what is being done to what is being achieved. It is clear that better information is needed as to diversity within the legal professions and other providers of legal services. However, experience within the HE sector confirms that, where changes in a diversity profile can be identified, it remains very difficult to establish in detail how far changes in practice by HE institutions have helped bring those changes about. In any event, HEIs will be taking forward the work of the Milburn Panel in so far as its recommendations have become government policy, as set out in the government document, *Higher Ambitions* and in Lord Mandelson's letter to HEFCE of 22 December 2009.

7. We are keen to collaboratively with the Board in pursuing its objectives of improving access to justice and the quality of legal services, objectives in which legal academics have always taken a keen interest.

S H Bailey
Hon Secretary, Society of Legal Scholars
5.3.10