UK Perspective

How well is legal education serving law firms and their clients?

26 June 2012

Graeme Menzies
Tel: +44(0)1223 222204
Fax: +44(0)1223 222254
graeme.menzies@mills-reeve.com
Agenda

- Context
- Structure of the legal profession in the UK
- The Changing Legal Landscape
- Qualifying as a Legal Professional
- How well equipped are our new lawyers?
- Recent trends in educating the lawyers of tomorrow
- What does Mills & Reeve LLP do?
Structure of the legal profession in the UK

- Judges
- Barristers/pupils
- Solicitors/trainees
- Legal executives
- Paralegals
## The Changing UK legal landscape (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>1987</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Around 120,000 practising solicitors</td>
<td>Approximately 48,000 solicitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10,000 firms</td>
<td>Approximately 7,500 firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost 60,000 female legal professionals</td>
<td>Just over 10,000 female legal professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,500 law degree applications</td>
<td>2600 law graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24,000 LPC applications for 10,500 places</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,434 students enrol for the LPC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000 applications for 6,000 training contracts</td>
<td>2900 trainees commencing articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximately 1 solicitor/500 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Changing UK legal landscape (2)

- Blurring the distinction between solicitors and barristers
  - Direct access to the Bar
  - Higher rights of audience

- Alternative business structures - Legal Services Act 2007
  - ‘Tesco law’
  - Barristers’ firms
  - Alliances/franchise legal providers – QualitySolicitors in WHSmith
  - Law firms providing non-legal advice

- Virtual law firms

- Jackson reforms - to increase the effectiveness of the legal & court system (controlling excesses of litigation & fees) & save money

- Training – Accutrainee, combined LPC and TC, apprenticeships

- Outsourcing and growth – paralegal support units
Qualifying as a legal professional (1)

- **For solicitors**
  1. Qualifying law degree (3/4 years), or non-law degree & Graduate Diploma in Law (1 year)
  2. Legal Practice Course (1 year)
  3. Training Contract (2 years)
  4. Qualification & entry on to the Roll of Solicitors (regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority)

- **For barristers**
  1. Qualifying law degree (3/4 years), or non-law degree & Graduate Diploma in Law (1 year)
  2. Bar Professional Training Course (1 year) within which students attend 12 “dinners”
  3. Pupillage (1 year)
  4. Tenancy & admittance to the Bar (regulated by the Bar Standards Board)
Qualifying as a legal professional (2)

- **Costs**
  - University – around £27,000 - £37,000
  - Legal Practice Course/Bar Professional Training Course
    - between £9,000 - £17,000
  - **Total: £50,000 to £70,000 (including maintenance)**

- **Firm’s costs**
  - £100,000 - £120,000

- **Difficulties of obtaining a training contract**
  - 850 applications for 15 training contracts
Then and Now

- **Me**
  - Law degree
    - Academic
    - ‘Not a practical course’
    - Personal thoughts?
  - Professional Qualification (6 months)
    - Rote learning
    - Exams at the end
  - 2 years “articles”
    - 6 letters & 5 offers
    - Learning on the job
    - “Coke is it?”

- **My trainee**
  - Law degree
    - Still academic and theoretical
    - Extra curricular activities
  - Legal Practice Course (1 year)
    - Practical application
  - 2 years Training Contract
    - 1 application to Mills & Reeve LLP
    - Typically 70 – 80 applications are the norm!
  - Much more practical!
Recent trends in educating the lawyers of tomorrow (1)

- Universities (law degree)
  - Commercial awareness workshops
  - Pro bono – FLAG (free legal advice group, citizens advice bureau)
  - ‘Law in Practice’ module

- Law Schools (Legal Practice Course/Graduate Diploma in Law)
  - More distance/e-learning, shortened LPC courses (fast track) and combining study and the training contract
  - Interviewing, advocacy, legal research
  - Law firm tailored modules
Recent trends in educating the lawyers of tomorrow (2)

- Firms (Training Contract)
  - Training courses
  - Professional Skills Course:
    - Writing & Drafting skills,
    - Advocacy & Communication Skills,
    - Client Care & Professional Standards,
    - Prioritisation & Workload management,
    - Participating in meetings,
    - Networking skills,
    - Persuasion & Influencing others

- Onus on students
  - Competition
  - Oversupply
Our approach?

- How do you select the right recruits?
  - 850 applications for 15-20 places
  - Academic requirements
  - Acid test – “can I leave this person with a client?”
    - Commercial awareness
      - “can do” attitude
      - Initiative

- Aptitude test – verbal, numeracy, logic
- “Bridge to Practice” Programme at Kaplan
- In house Training Programme – soft skills, commercial & technical
- Secondments
- Funding
Conclusions

- Today’s trainees have impressive legal training and some practical skills
- Rapid market changes – moving target
- Challenges for tomorrow’s students & law schools
- Downward pressure on fees
- Fewer jobs/different jobs
- Increase in LPO/paralegals
- More competition
- Legal Education & Training Review