

Institute of Professional Legal Studies

Profs Talk: Issue 5

You may have seen the recent debate on whether the Auckland District Law Society should incorporate or be amalgamated within the New Zealand Law Society. The debate got me thinking about how important it is to have a unified profession. A profession that is unified in how it deals with issues of importance.

One such issue is the right that new lawyers have to receive quality pre-admission legal training to enable them to act competently in the work force from the outset.

When choosing a pre-admission training provider, the questions that the Institute believes are important are:

“Does the provider teach skills that are directly transferable to the workplace?”

“What mentoring and support does the training provider offer?”

“What is the provider’s experience in legal training and what is the experience level of its teaching and course development staff?”

“Having completed profs, what will the trainee lawyer be able to do competently when they start practice?”

It is a desire to provide affirmative answers to these questions that drives the Institute’s emphasis on quality in both course content and delivery. The Institute is constantly updating its course to reflect current practice.



Bernadette Wilson
National Director

2009 COURSE DATES

19 week part-time online course dates

Intake 1D

19 January 2009 to
30 May 2009

Intake 2D

2 March 2009 to
11 July 2009

Intake 3D

6 April 2009 to
15 August 2009

Intake 4D

18 May 2009 to
26 September 2009

Intake 5D

3 August 2009 to
12 December 2009

Intake 6D

7 December 2009 to
1 May 2010

There is an orientation day in the week prior to the course starting.

Breakdown of online course

Weeks 1 to 3 – Online
Weeks 4 and 5 – Onsite
Weeks 6 to 18 – Online
Weeks 18 and 19 – Onsite

The first onsite block is for 12 days, Monday to Saturday. The second onsite block is for 9 days, Thursday to the following Saturday.

Staff Profile

DAVID GIBSON Educational Technologist

If you are doing the part-time online course, you will first meet David when you receive his Welcome Email. This email contains the password you need to access the course, details about the orientation seminar, and other general information required to ensure you are ready to go online with IPLS.



As the Institute’s online tech. support person, David believes in a high level of availability, and online trainees can contact him either by email or phone.

Some background on David: he practised law from 1972 to 1995 as partner in both medium and small law firms primarily as a commercial property lawyer. He has been an instructor with the Institute, teaching the LP module of the PLS course both onsite and online.

As a practitioner, David wrote and presented a paper on the Requisitions clause in the ADLS standard form ASP to the 1995 NZLS Property Law Conference.

More recently, with the Institute, David has been full time in course design, leading the development of the Negotiation CD-ROM and technical aspects of the part-time online course.

Currently, David uses his mix of practical legal experience and educational design skills to effectively support both trainees and instructors involved with the part-time online course.

And when David's not at work, you can find him fishing and enjoying his holiday home on the Coromandel.

Trainee Profile

PETER KELLIHER from Webb Farry



I started my legal training in my early 30's. I was working full time when my interest in employment law was aroused. I started studying at Otago University initially part time as I wanted to continue working (and earning a living) as long as I could. Eventually I bit the bullet and became a full time student.

I chose IPLS mainly because of the flexibility of hours. This allowed me to work during the day, spend some time with the kids, and study once they were in bed.

I was admitted in 2007 and I work for Webb Farry.

What I enjoy most about Webb Farry is the variety of work I do, it keeps the job interesting, and you're always learning.

What attributes do you need to be a successful online trainee?

I think you do have to be committed to doing your study everyday, the course does take up some time, so you have to regularly chip away at it...well, this worked for me.

How important was your instructor for your online training, especially in respect of feedback and support?

The instructors really helped me in two ways: 1) They were great motivators. It was rewarding receiving feedback on work you really put the effort in, it kept you going. 2) They gave practical help and explained it in a manner that enabled me to understand where I had gone wrong on tasks.

How do you feel about the quality and type of training you received? Were you challenged?

My training was perfect for entering into a law firm; it set you up to hit the ground running. You were taught to be professional and accurate, factors I believe assisted my transition. You were definitely challenged, but I'm thankful it was, the lessons learnt were invaluable.

As a trainee lawyer, what skills did you learn that you have you found most useful in practice? Can you give a specific example?

I found the interview skills to be most useful. IPLS taught me the type of questions to ask and how to ask them. When it comes to interviewing clients for 'real' you can always research the law after the clients go but you can't do this if you haven't gathered the information from the client by asking the right questions.

Any words of wisdom for future IPLS trainees?

Work hard from day one, don't leave it to the weekend!!!

13 week full-time onsite course dates

Intake 1

30 March 2009 to
1 July 2009
(Auckland, Wellington and
Christchurch)

Intake 2

3 August 2009 to
30 October 2009
(Auckland and Wellington)

Intake 3

7 December 2009 to
22 March 2010
(Auckland, Hamilton,
Wellington, Christchurch
and Dunedin)

You are onsite from
8:30am to 4:00pm,
Monday to Friday, for
13 weeks.

The 13 weeks are divided
into two modules: Legal
Practice and Litigation.

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