

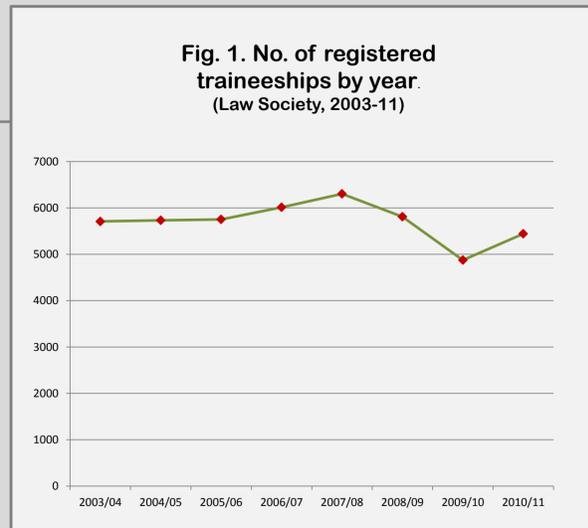
Enhancing mathematical literacy to promote graduate employability.

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1 The Issue

The global economic crisis has created a challenging legal graduate employment market (see Fig 1). This has placed increased expectations on the Qualifying Law Degree (QLD) to deliver graduates who possess key transferable and employability skills such as mathematical literacy.

As law teachers we must question what our law schools currently provide in terms of opportunities for students to develop their mathematical literacy and consider additional ways to enhance this skill-set in order to promote graduate employability and future-proof our students' careers.



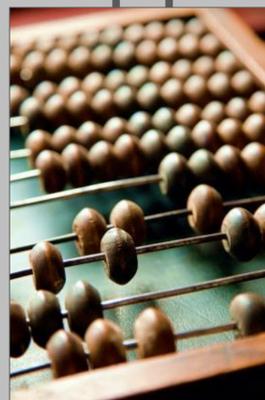
2 The Analysis

“Mathematical literacy is an individual’s capacity to identify and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world, to make well-founded judgements and to use and engage with mathematics in ways that meet the needs of that individual’s life as a constructive, concerned and reflective citizen.”
(National Numeracy 2012)

Expectations

Employability skills are the most important attributes that businesses look for in new recruits, but graduates are currently falling short of employers’ expectations...”
(Anderson 2011)

“A student should demonstrate a basic ability where relevant and as the basis for an argument, to use, present and evaluate information provided in numerical or statistical form.”
(QAA 2007, p. 4)



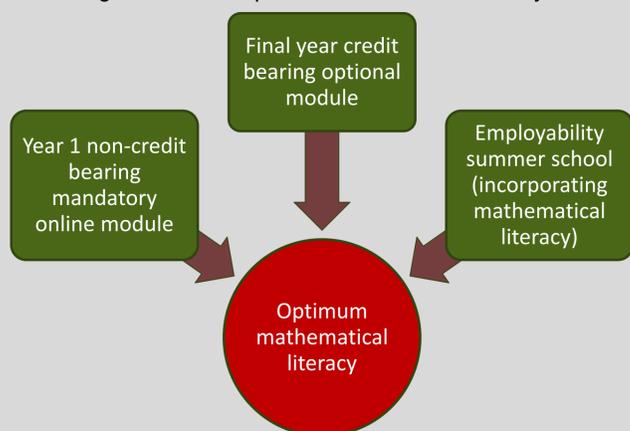
Provision

A content analysis of all module specifications for the QLD offered at Nottingham Law School was conducted. This found that only one module, the Law of Contract with Problem Solving, offered some teaching which encouraged mathematical literacy.

Assuming that this level of provision is indicative of that offered within other law schools then it can be concluded that while the QLD meets basic regulatory requirements it is unlikely to be offering employers the mathematically literate students which they seek.

3 The Solution

Fig 2. Model for optimum mathematical literacy



In such a challenging legal graduate employment market we must deliver modules and extra-curricular activities that develop skill-rich graduates who are both employable and well equipped to become the lawyers of tomorrow (Suskind 2012, p.5). To achieve this we should place mathematical literacy alongside language literacy at the heart of the activities offered within our law schools. This could be achieved through the implementation of a simple model (see Fig 2) without detracting from the substantive content of the QLD. All that is needed is the will (and mathematical literacy) of the law faculty to facilitate it.