

## **Confidence in LLB drops further**

A survey conducted by financial services provider PPS has shown that attorneys' confidence in the quality of the LLB degree has further declined. The survey is conducted on a quarterly basis and PPS recently revealed the results of its second quarter analysis, which was compiled at the end of July 2012.

When asked whether they believed the current LLB degree sufficiently prepares prospective practitioners to enter and succeed in the attorneys' profession, the survey of almost 500 attorneys revealed a 10% decline to 21% from 31% compared to the first quarter results.

When asked how confident they were about the future of the attorneys' profession over the next five years, 72% showed confidence in it, while 40% said that they would encourage their children to enter the profession. This signifies a 5% and 4% drop respectively.

In a press release, head of group marketing and stakeholder relations at PPS, Gerhard Joubert, said: 'This is very worrying. Not only is there a shortage of key skills in South Africa but children often take a lead from their parents' perspectives and if they see the legal profession as a difficult or unrewarding vocation, this does not bode well for attracting new entrants.'

Mr Joubert said that PPS had focused on graduate professionals for the survey, adding that discussions were taking place between several universities and the relevant legal professional associations to ensure the ongoing relevance of the LLB degree.

There was a 1% increase to 45% in the attorneys' perception that high ethical standards are maintained and that the attorneys' profession is regarded as an ethical, professional and noble one. Mr Joubert said that while this result had increased marginally, it was still concerning that the confidence level was so low. 'It is imperative that measures are taken to ensure the reputation of the attorneys' profession is perceived as fair and unbiased, as this is the crux of an effective legal system,' he said.

Mr Joubert concluded: 'The second quarter survey of local attorneys has revealed a very worrying decline in confidence levels across very important issues for the profession, most notably the quality of the current LLB degree. It is vital that these concerns are addressed to ensure the future of this vital profession in the country.'

**Other results from the survey include:**

- A 5% decrease to 45% in confidence about the standard of education in South Africa over the next five years.
- Concern about the lack of mathematics and science graduates increased by 1% to 93%.
- Concern about the rising cost of tertiary education decreased by 2% to 88%.
- Confidence in the rate of unemployment improving in South Africa decreased by 3% to 40%.
- See 2012 (Aug) *DR* 8.

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