

## Social Profile: DPLP Students and LLB Students

### The Question

DPLP students were asked the postcode of their home address<sup>1</sup> prior to starting their undergraduate law degree. This was used to allocate each student to their respective quintile on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).<sup>2</sup> These figures were then compared to the equivalent figures for those commencing their LLB in 2010/11.<sup>3</sup>

### Summary of Results

SIMD Quintile	Proportion of students from each SIMD Quintile		
	Survey Results	Comparison with LLB students	
	DPLP (UoE)	LLB (Scotland)	LLB (UoE)
5 <sup>th</sup> (Least deprived 20%)	43.8%	34.4%	44.4%
4 <sup>th</sup> (Least deprived 20-40%)	35.0%	22.5%	25.0%
3 <sup>rd</sup> (Least deprived 40-60%)	13.8%	18.2%	16.7%
2 <sup>nd</sup> (Most deprived 20-40%)	5.0%	14.5%	11.1%
1 <sup>st</sup> (Most deprived 20%)	2.5%	10.4%	2.8%

### Discussion

79% of the DPLP students surveyed were drawn from the 40% least deprived in Scottish society, as measured by the SIMD index. This is more than ten times the proportion (7.5%) from the 40% most deprived.<sup>4</sup> Those from more deprived backgrounds are under-represented at undergraduate level (making up only 25% of those commencing the LLB, rather than around 40% if participation rates were equal) but the drop-off between 25% and 7.5% starkly demonstrates that most of those from more deprived backgrounds who commence the LLB do not progress to the DPLP. Without a DPLP they cannot move from studying law to entering the legal profession.

It may be argued that those from more deprived backgrounds are less well represented on the University of Edinburgh's (UoE) LLB, so this increased exclusivity may be reflected in the DPLP at the same institution. But participation rates for those from more deprived backgrounds still drop by almost half between the rates on the UoE LLB (14%) and the DPLP (7.5%). The figures should be going the other way as the UoE is one of only 6 institutions providing a DPLP (teaching around 25% of DPLP students), compared to 10 providing the LLB (teaching 12.5% of LLB students). All 4 of the LLB universities not providing DPLPs have higher participation rates for those from more deprived backgrounds than UoE, so students from these institutions moving to DPLP study at UoE should, in principle, improve the UoE participation rates at DPLP level.

A further argument is that the UoE DPLP fees are towards the higher end of the range of fees charged by institutions<sup>5</sup>. In fact, UoE is the only of the DPLP providers to offer a formal bursary scheme for its DPLP students. Over 30 students received support. This made the UoE DPLP in 2012/13 one of the most accessible courses as far as fees are concerned.

1 Responses which declined to state a full postcode or where the postcode was not in Scotland were disregarded.

2 For more information on SIMD, see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>. Each SIMD datazone has an approximately equal population so, if representation was equal across the deprivation levels, 20% of students would come from each quintile and 40% each from the 40% most and least deprived areas.

3 Sourced from NUS Scotland by FOI request to the Scottish Funding Council.

4 If participation was equal across the social spectrum, 20% of LLB and DPLP students would be drawn from each SIMD quintile.

5 For 2013/14, fees and compulsory material costs vary between £5,995 and £6,995, dependent on institution.

## DPLP Students: Sources of Funding

### The Question

DPLP students were asked to indicate which funding sources had made a significant contribution to their fees and living costs for the year of DPLP study. Those who indicated a Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan (PTFL) contributed to their costs were asked whether the PTFL had been critical to their ability to undertake the course or whether it had merely been helpful but they would have found a way to fund the course were it not to have been available.

### Summary of Results

Funding Source	% students
Family / Parental Support	82%
<i>Family / Parental OR Personal Savings</i>	92%
Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan	50%
<i>PTFL critical</i>	33%
<i>PTFL critical (no family / parent / personal savings)</i>	2%
<i>PTFL helpful but not critical</i>	18%
Personal Savings	39%
Part Time Work	30%
Future Employing Law Firm	25%
Commercial Lending	6%

### Discussion

DPLP students are faced with a funding shortfall of over £10,000 for the year of study.<sup>6</sup>

The survey revealed that an overwhelmingly majority of DPLP students receive a substantial contribution towards their costs from parents or family. When combined with those making a substantial contribution from personal saving, likely to be mostly mature students with savings from a previous career, this rose to 92% of students. This highlights the financial barrier facing those without families able to afford to make significant contributions to the cost of study.

The statistics also demonstrate the lack of effectiveness of the PTFL. It does help some students (33% of all students indicating they could not have taken the course without it) but the vast majority of these were still also reliant on significant contributions from family, parents or personal savings. Only 2% of students were enabled to study the course by the PTFL despite lacking a significant contribution from family or personal savings. In contrast, 68% of students did not need a contribution from the PTFL to undertake the course (including 1 in 3 of those actually taking the PTFL).

This clearly demonstrates that the £3,400 cap on assistance prevents a significant proportion of graduates undertaking the DPLP as they cannot bridge the funding gap.

---

<sup>6</sup> A median cost for fees and materials is £6,500. Living costs will depend on individual circumstances but the Scottish Government's 'minimum income guarantee' for students, used to set the maximum loan for undergraduate living cost loans provides a conservative estimate. It is £7,250 for a year of study. Deducting the maximum PTFL of £3,400 leaves students with a funding shortfall of £10,350.

# DPLP Students: Comparison of Social Profile with the Legal Profession

## The Question

DPLP students were asked to classify the occupations of their Father and Mother (at the time of commencing their undergraduate law degree) into one of seven categories. These categories were chosen to align with the categories used in a 2006 survey of the legal profession and the figures in the survey compared with the detailed 2006 results as tabulated in a later (2010) comparative report.<sup>7</sup> To provide a crude estimate of social profile, the categories of occupation were divided into those traditionally seen as 'white collar' and 'blue collar' roles.<sup>8</sup>

DPLP students were also asked about their educational route to the DPLP. Students can achieve the necessary academic qualification either through an undergraduate law degree (LLB) or the Law Society of Scotland Examinations.

## Summary of Results

Father's Occupation	Proportion of respondents		
	Survey Results	2006 Survey of Legal Professionals	
	DPLP (UoE)	Aged up to 35	Aged 36 - 45
'White Collar'	77.3%	75.7%	74.2%
'Blue Collar'	22.7%	24.2%	25.8%

Educational Route	Proportion of respondents		
	Survey Results	2006 Survey of Legal Professionals	
	DPLP (UoE)	Aged up to 35	Aged 36 - 45
LLB	99%	93%	81%
LSS Exams	1%	7%	19%

## Discussion

The results indicate that the social profile of the profession is not improving. The figures tend to suggest the profession is becoming more exclusive but, given the small changes seen, the relatively small numbers surveyed by the DPLP survey and the roundings employed in the presentation of the 2006 data, it is not possible to state this with certainty.

In contrast, the route to qualification is clearly becoming almost exclusively through an undergraduate law degree. The decline in those taking the Law Society of Scotland examinations may be due in part to the increased availability of part-time undergraduate law degrees. It may also reflect the fact that, over recent years, a significant social and political premium has been placed on encouraging all those with the aptitude to take up a place at University. This may have the effect of reducing the numbers of those deciding not to go to University but rather to learn their profession through entering legal employment straight from school.

<sup>7</sup> The 2006 and 2010 reports are available at <https://www.lawscot.org.uk/about-us/equality--diversity/the-society/published-research>. The 2010 report used different occupational categories and it was decided to use the 2006 categories as the comparator.

<sup>8</sup> The categories of 'Professional', 'Executive', 'Management' and 'Legal' were taken to be 'white collar'. The categories 'Skilled' and 'Unskilled' were taken as 'blue collar'. Those categorised as 'Unemployed' (2% or less in any measure) or 'Parent or Full-Time Carer' were disregarded. Only Father's occupation was considered. It will immediately be apparent that this process is crude and relies to a certain extent on social stereotyping.