

Reform of Undergraduate Legal Education under Interaction with the Unified Qualification Exam for Legal Professionals

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Abstract: Since the opening of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals, the unified qualification exam for legal professionals has had an impact on legal education. Passing the examination has gradually become one of the evaluation indexes of undergraduate legal education and the quality of undergraduate legal graduates. The preparation for the examination has interfered with the normal order of undergraduate teaching of law and affected the teaching content. There is a basis for benign interaction between the legal examination and undergraduate legal education. Undergraduate legal education should take applied legal education as its core content, take the "three-step progression" teaching as the realization path, and take the preparation for the legal examination as one of the necessary links of itself.

Keywords: unified qualification exam for legal professionals, undergraduate legal education, interaction, three-step progression, applied jurisprudence

1. Introduction

There is a unified professional entrance examination, which, because of its low pass rate, prevents most law graduates from practicing the legal profession. Third-year undergraduate law students can take the unified qualification exam for legal professionals. This has led to a large number of undergraduate students investing a lot of time and energy to take the examination, which has had an impact and influence on the legal education. Legal education is faced with the pressure of employment, facing the impact of the legal examination, and the serious disconnect between legal education and practice has been criticized. This paper is based on the undergraduate education of law, analyzing the impact of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals on legal education, the basis of the interaction between them, the reform of undergraduate education of law and other specific measures.

In today's legal education system, the unified legal professional qualification examination has become a crucial turning point. Due to the low pass rate of the examination, undergraduate legal education not only faces the pressure of students' employment but also deals with the increasing gap between legal practice and educational philosophy. This situation has triggered a profound reflection on the model of undergraduate legal education. Legal education needs to pay more attention to the cultivation of practical skills to ensure that students are not only masters of theoretical knowledge but also professionals with the ability to work in the legal field. The curriculum and teaching methods should also be more flexible and diverse to adapt to the changing demands of the legal profession market. This reform can not only enhance the competitiveness of law graduates in the job market but also narrow the gap between theory and practice, thus improving the overall quality of legal education. At the same time, this also imposes improvement requirements on the content and format of the legal professional qualification examination, making it more in line with the practical needs of the legal profession, rather than just a test of theoretical knowledge.

2. Impact of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals on undergraduate legal education

2.1. Gradually becoming one of the indicators for evaluating the quality of undergraduate legal education and law graduates

In recent years, more and more social organizations, especially legal practice departments, have gradually taken the passing rate of the exam as one of the indicators for evaluating legal education, and have made passing or not passing the exam as one of the recruitment conditions. The passing rate of the exam as one of the evaluation indexes is the inevitable result of objective choice. There are several reasons for this: firstly, the purpose of setting the unified qualification exam for legal professionals is to select legal talents who can enter the legal profession, which itself is the evaluation standard of legal talents, and it is the only basic standard for evaluating the ability of legal profession at present. The extremely low passing rate of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals itself determines that those who have passed the unified qualification exam for legal professionals have a higher level of legal knowledge than those who have not. This feature of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals determines that it will inevitably become the evaluation standard. Secondly, the goal of legal education is to deliver legal talents, society currently does not exist in other specialized evaluation of legal vocational ability of a unified standard, the unified qualification exam for legal professionals of course becomes the evaluation standard of legal education output talents, and then becomes the evaluation of the standard of legal education. Thirdly, the exam is set up at the beginning of the core curriculum of legal education as the basic content of the examination, the examination content of the qualification exam and legal education has a high degree of overlap, and this overlap determines the feasibility and acceptability of the qualification exam to become the evaluation standard. Therefore, the qualification exam will inevitably become, and objectively has already become, one of the evaluation standards for legal education and legal talents.

2.2. Interference with the normal order of legal education

The exam has caused major disruptions to the normal order of undergraduate law teaching. The biggest disruption is the presence of dual schools[1]. Currently, inside every university is filled with multiple training organizations for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals. Students preparing for the exams do not actively participate in normal law class and skip classes to attend the legal professional qualification exam training courses. Even for those students who attend classroom, most of them are just in the classroom, and their minds are still on legal professional qualification exam preparation. Many students do not bring their textbooks, do not take notes, do not listen to what the instructor teaches, and just read the content of the legal professional qualification exam preparation from the bottom of the room. During the period of preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals, the status quo of tangible unified qualification exam for legal professionals training institutions and intangible state of preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals coexisting with legal education has been formed in the process of teaching law. This is not conducive to the realization of the goals of legal education, making the normal teaching of law a mere formality. As the content examined in the unified qualification exam for legal professionals is basically the same as that of the core curriculum of law, and some of the courses in the core curriculum of law are usually arranged to be studied mainly in the sixth and seventh semesters, the curriculum will be affected by the preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals.

2.3. Impact on the legal teaching content

Whether undergraduate legal education should be vocational education or quality education has been discussed for many years in the legal education community, and there is still disagreement [2]. Since the launch of the Legal Profession Qualification Examination, it has gradually affected the content of law teaching.

First, courses outside the scope of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals are neglected. Although the main contents of the core courses of law are the scope of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals, some expansive courses and cross-curricular courses in legal education are not covered[3], such as sociology of law, legal economics, and methodology of law. These courses, for law students, are equally important. However, since the unified qualification exam for legal professionals does not cover the contents of these subjects, and the time of offering these subjects is often synchronized

with the preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals. As a result, students are not interested in these courses and do not pay enough attention to them, and the teaching of these courses gradually shrinks and is gradually neglected.

Secondly, the content taught in the courses within the scope of the assessment for exam has been gradually cut down, and the key contents have been gradually replaced by the syllabus of the examination. Even for the courses within the scope of the assessment for the exam, there is a big difference compared with the content of the courses in legal education. For example, in courses such as economic law, commercial law, international law, international economic law, environmental protection law, etc., the traditional course content of legal education covers a large amount of content, and the content of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals covers a smaller amount of content. As the influence of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals on legal education deepens, even in the core courses, the number of hours and content are being reduced, and the teaching focus is gradually converging with the unified qualification exam for legal professionals.

Thirdly, due to the influence of the preparation time for the qualification examination for legal professions, the practical teaching session is a mere formality and fails to achieve the teaching purpose. In recent years, the reform of law teaching has mainly focused on the reform of practical teaching, and teaching methods and approaches such as legal clinic education, case teaching method and moot court have been strengthened to varying degrees. However, since these teaching methods, especially the comprehensive practical teaching sessions are carried out in the upper grades, especially the third grade, they conflict with the preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals in terms of time. Most students are unwilling to devote time and energy to practical teaching due to their preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals, resulting in the practical teaching activities being a mere formality and failing to achieve the effect of practical teaching.[4]

3. The basis for positive interaction between undergraduate legal education and the unified qualification exam for legal professionals

Although undergraduate legal education has been impacted by the unified qualification exam for legal professionals, which has had some negative impacts on undergraduate legal education, it has also forced undergraduate legal education to undergo in-depth reforms. For most of the legal education institutions, they cannot influence the top-level design of the state's unified qualification exam for legal professionals, and they can only adapt to the unified qualification exam for legal professionals system and try to carry out the reform of legal education in their own schools. Undergraduate legal education and the unified qualification exam for legal professionals can proceed in the direction of benign interaction, as there is a common basis for both.

3.1. Both have overlapping objectives: legal talent

Both undergraduate legal education and the unified qualification exam for legal professionals hope to cultivate or select qualified legal talents in a certain way. Legal education fosters complex legal talents with high moral character and integrity, a solid theoretical foundation in jurisprudence, a systematic grasp of legal knowledge, and a sense of creativity and innovative ability. The purpose of the unified qualification exam for legal professionals is to improve the quality of legal professionals. Legal education training is a complex "legal people", and unified qualification exam for legal professionals is from these "legal people" to select the best to fill the legal profession. The unified qualification exam for legal professionals is an intermediate link, which is a bridge between legal education and legal profession. Legal education should be the source and foundation of talent cultivation, legal education is the foundation and premise of the qualification examination for the legal profession, and the qualification examination for the legal profession should be a means to test the results of legal education, each of which has its own advantages and merits, and should promote and improve each other [5]. Therefore, the qualification examination for the legal profession and undergraduate education in law are mutually connected in terms of the goal of training and selecting legal talents.

3.2. Both have a common core: the development of legal thinking

In people's thinking activities, law is always associated with various rational concepts. Law cannot be separated from reason, and rationalized social life cannot be separated from law. University legal education is not only about teaching legal knowledge and methods, but also about cultivating the spirit of

law and belief in the rule of law, mastering the method of legal thinking and the use of legal language. Focusing on the cultivation and training of students' legal thinking is the core goal of legal education. The unified qualification exam for legal professionals, as a means of selecting outstanding legal talents, also focuses on the examination of legal thinking. Legal thinking is a basic virtue that legal people should have, and it has become the link between the professional characteristics of legal people and the legal professional community, the core content of legal reasoning and legal argumentation, and the concrete way necessary for the continuation of the life of the law and the realization of legal value. As a national legal professional system, the unified qualification exam for legal professionals centers on the core element of legal professional ability, i.e., legal thinking, which is undoubtedly determined by the purpose and objective of the system. Thus, the undergraduate legal education with "legal thinking" as the core cultivation goal and the unified qualification exam for legal professionals system with "legal thinking" as the core examination goal have the core of benign interaction, i.e. "legal thinking". "[6].

4. Reform measures for undergraduate legal education

4.1. Applied legal education as a core element of undergraduate legal education

Undergraduate legal education aims to cultivate applied legal talents, mainly cultivating legal talents who are familiar with legal knowledge, mastering legal skills and able to apply legal knowledge to solve legal problems. Applied legal talents should have legal application ability, both legal vocational ability, which includes the ability to collect and process legal information, the ability to think legally, the ability to accurately judge and grasp the process of judicial activities, the ability to give evidence, the ability to testify, the ability to express legal affairs, the ability to write legal documents, the ability to abide by the ethics of the legal profession and the ability to avoid professional risks. The core of undergraduate legal education is the cultivation of legal professional ability. Applied jurisprudence is the jurisprudence that takes the implementation of law as the object of study, and applied jurisprudence mainly studies the process of justice and law enforcement. The key to how the law is implemented is how legal talents apply the law. Therefore, the core content of undergraduate legal education aiming at the cultivation of applied legal talents is applied legal education [7].

4.2. Three-step progression teaching as a realization path for undergraduate legal education

The entire courses of jurisprudence can be divided into three categories: "General Knowledge and Principles", "Systems and Norms" and "Conduct and Skills". "General knowledge and principles" courses mainly undertake the teaching task of the basic theory of law, the purpose is to enable students to have a preliminary systematic understanding of theoretical jurisprudence and the basic theory of jurisprudence, for the subsequent study of the current system and norms to lay the theoretical foundation, which is known as the first step of the learning stage. The "system and norms" category of courses is mainly the study of the current legal system and norms, based on the interpretation and application of existing legislation, including civil law, criminal law, administrative law, procedural law and other sectoral laws. Compared with the content of traditional sectoral laws, these courses emphasize the application of current legislation. This is referred to as the second learning stage. Courses in the category of "conduct and skills" are mainly courses on legal professional conduct and legal professional skills, including courses on legal professional ethics, legal argumentation, legal interpretation and application, legal research, legal mediation and negotiation, legal writing and lawyers' practice, etc. Such courses focus on practical teaching to cultivate legal thinking and legal professional ability as the main task. This is called the third step of learning stage. The teaching of the "three-step progression" covers all major aspects of undergraduate legal education [8-9].

4.3. Preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals as an essential part of undergraduate legal education

Preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals has a negative impact on undergraduate legal education. The only way to eliminate this impact is to take the path of adapting to the objective situation of students preparing for the exam [10-11]. The best way to adapt to the objective situation is to make preparation for the exam a necessary part of legal education. Preparation for the exam generally takes place from May to September each year, in the middle to late sixth semester and early seventh semester. Preparation for the exam as a necessary part of the education requires a reasonable arrangement of teaching and articulation between the above time periods. Preparation for the unified

qualification exam for legal professionals is the summary and improvement stage of the second stage of the "Three-Step Progressive" teaching, and the foundation of the third stage of comprehensive practical teaching. Preparation for the qualification exam is more conducive to consolidating the mastery of legal knowledge by summarizing and reviewing the courses of the first and second stages in a short period of time. The traditional teaching of law is to teach and study different courses separately according to the teaching schedule, which affects the development and teaching effect of comprehensive practical teaching. Through the preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals, it is more conducive to the development of the third stage of comprehensive practical teaching to do a concentrated review of the first two stages of the course. Conducting the third stage of study on the basis of preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals is more conducive to the realization of the goals of legal education [12].

5. Conclusion

The unified qualification exam for legal professionals has had an impact on legal education. Passing the qualification exam has gradually become one of the evaluation indexes of undergraduate legal education and the quality of undergraduate legal graduates. The preparation for the qualification exam has interfered with the normal undergraduate teaching order of law, and affected the teaching content of undergraduate legal education. But there is a basis for benign interaction between the unified qualification exam for legal professionals and undergraduate legal education. Applied legal education should be regarded as its core content, the "three-step progression" teaching as the realization path of undergraduate legal education, and preparation for the unified qualification exam for legal professionals as a necessary part of undergraduate legal education.

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