Updating the 2020 IBA Blueprint on Global Legal Education

A Rapid Global Assessment in the Age of AI

International Bar Association · Law Schools Global League

Law Schools Global League

The short version, before the data

53.8%

vs 15.4%

High AI use among students, against faculty

19.2%

of law schools make AI or legal tech a compulsory course

7.7%

have a comprehensive institutional AI policy

96.2%

say critical thinking is now more important, not less

The 2020 Blueprint has not failed. It is out of balance.

Technology and skills are the two pillars that need the fastest revision and AI is what makes them urgent.

Evidence: survey of senior academic leadership across the Law Schools Global League, early 2026.

Where we started: the 2020 IBA Blueprint

Five drivers of change, each tied to a structural obstacle law schools had to overcome

1

Globalisation

Law schools are expanding international elements, but only a limited number have achieved deep or fully integrated internationalism.

2

Technology

Technology was already an emerging trend, but the pandemic transformed it from an innovation opportunity into a basic requirement for legal education.

3

Skills

Traditional legal skills remain fundamental, but law schools increasingly need to develop communication, financial, teamwork and legal tech abilities.

4

Access and regulation

Rules governing legal education and access to the profession continue to limit institutional flexibility, particularly in internationalisation and curricular innovation.

5

Diversity

Law schools face growing pressure to address diversity across geography, gender, culture and the composition of both student and faculty populations.

6

Covid-19

The pandemic moved technology to the forefront, reduced the relative prominence of internationalisation and exposed new challenges around wellbeing, equality and access to education.

Built on: 135 academic articles · desk research relating to 420 law schools · 369 survey responses from 70+ countries · interviews with deans in seven regions

Source: IBA Commission on the Future of Legal Services, LSGL and IE Law School, Blueprint for Global Legal Education (November 2020).

What changed between 2020 and 2026

Two shocks, of two different kinds

2020–2022 · COVID-19

An accelerator

- Technology moved from strategic option to operational necessity.
- Exposed unequal access to devices and connectivity.
- Broke remote assessment and academic integrity.
- Put new pressure on student and faculty wellbeing.

2023–2026 · GENERATIVE AI

A change of order

- Changes not only how law is taught, but how legal work is produced.
- Changes how that work is assessed and supervised.
- Impacts the curriculum, the exam and the professional profile at once.
- Moves faster than accreditation and licensing can follow.

The question is no longer whether legal institutions must evolve. It is whether they can move at the pace of the technology.

The evidence base

A rapid global assessment, not a long longitudinal study

33 LSGL member law schools

25 countries, five continents

26 institutional responses

6 dimensions measured

Respondents were law deans, associate deans of academic affairs and directors of legal innovation.

1 AI adoption

Depth of use by students, faculty and administrative staff

2 Curriculum

Mandatory, elective, cross-disciplinary or absent

3 Assessment and integrity

Over-reliance, reliability of evaluation, misconduct

4 Skills of the future lawyer

Which competencies gain and lose value

5 Policy and governance

From ad-hoc guidance to institution-wide frameworks

6 The 2020 trends

Which pillars remain valid, and which need urgent revision

AI use is most advanced among students

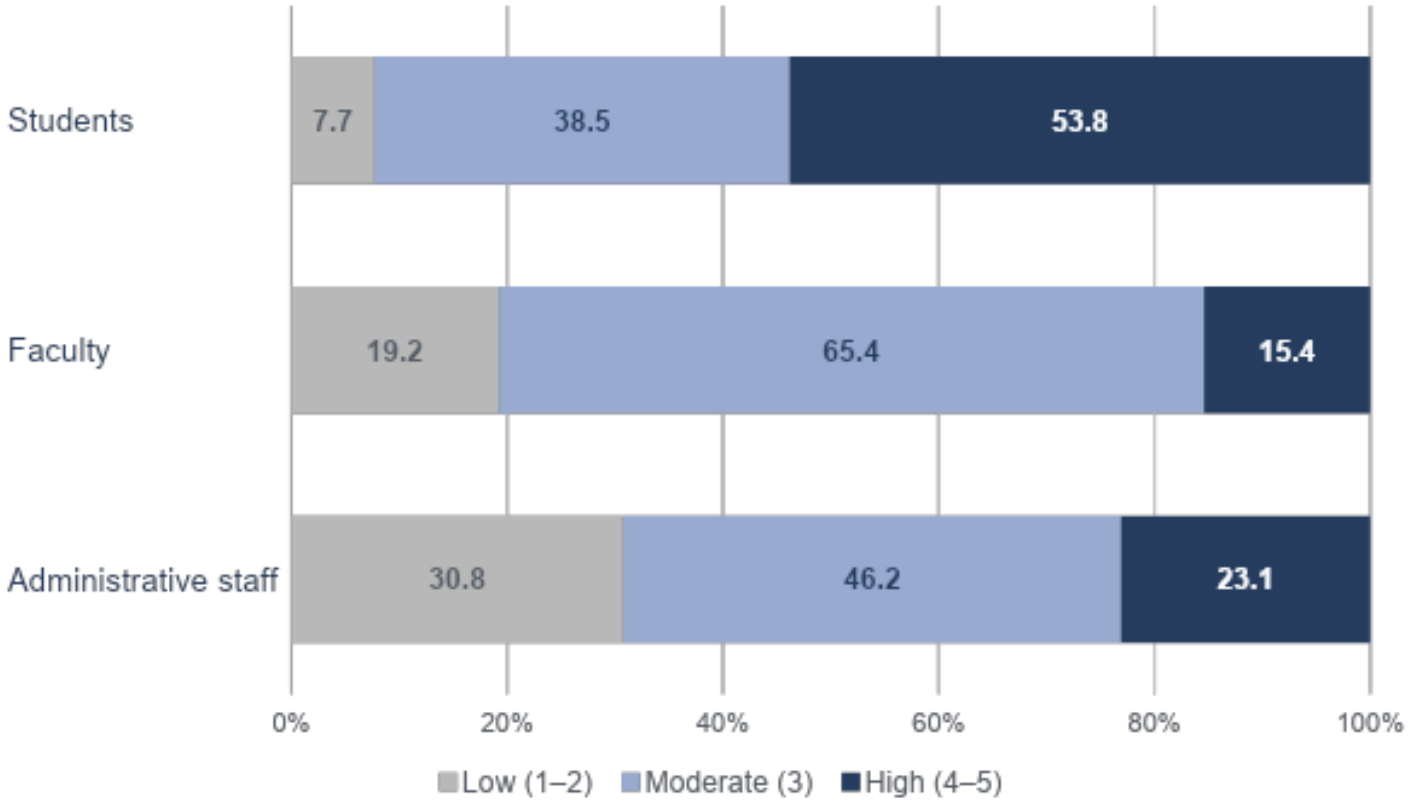


Figure 1 — Reported AI use by stakeholder group (share of respondents).

WHAT IT MEANS

- Adoption is not the story. Asymmetry is.
- Students are already operating at a level of use that their teachers have not reached.
- The gap sits between how the technology is used and how the institution is prepared to teach with it.
- This is an institutional capability gap, not a generational one.

AI and legal tech are in most curricula — integration is uneven

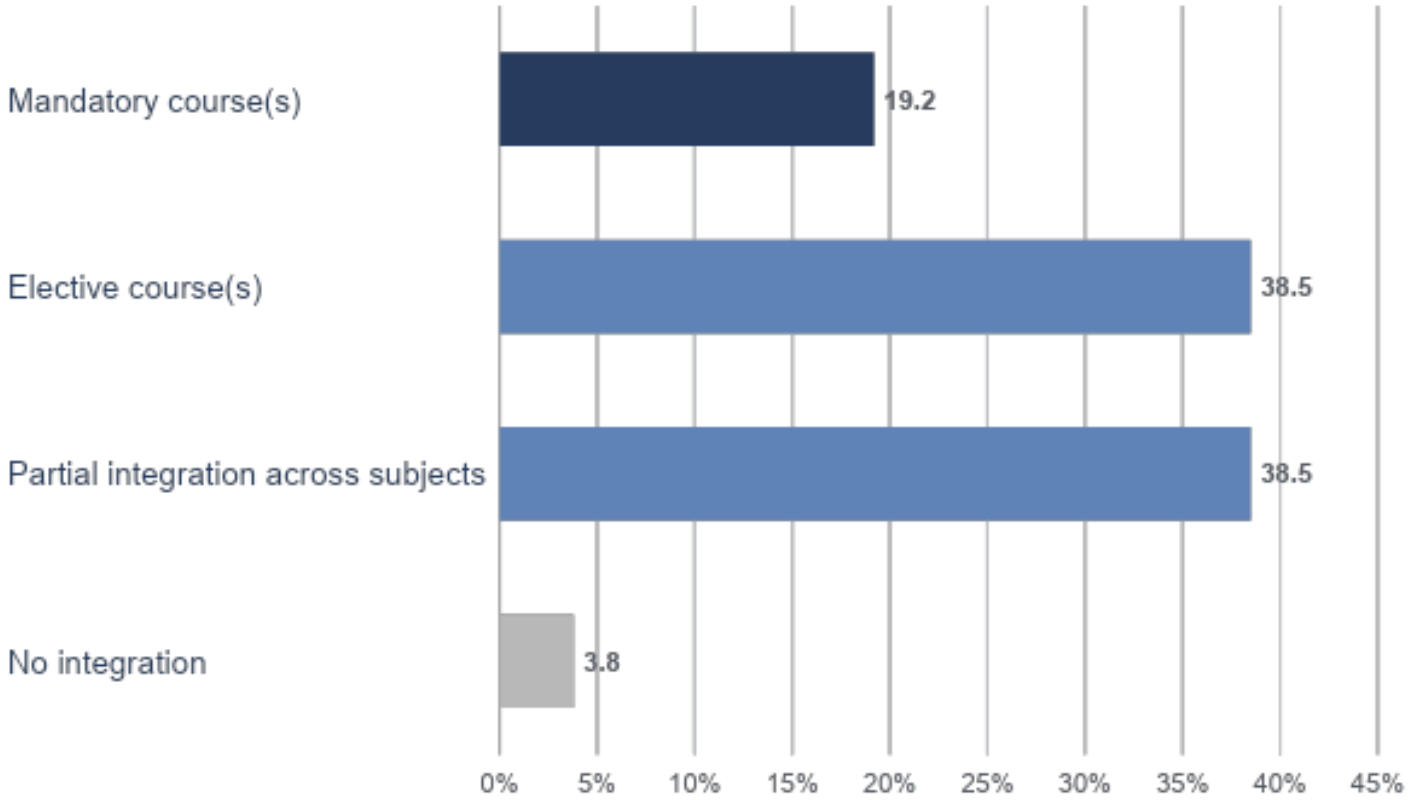


Figure 2 — Current integration of AI and legal tech into the curriculum.

WHAT IT MEANS

- 96.2 per cent report some formal presence of AI or legal tech. Coverage is no longer the issue.
- Only 19.2 per cent make it compulsory. For most students it remains optional or incidental.
- The question has shifted from whether AI belongs in the curriculum to how deep it goes.
- An elective does not change the competence of a cohort.

Assessment concerns: integrity, over-reliance, reliability

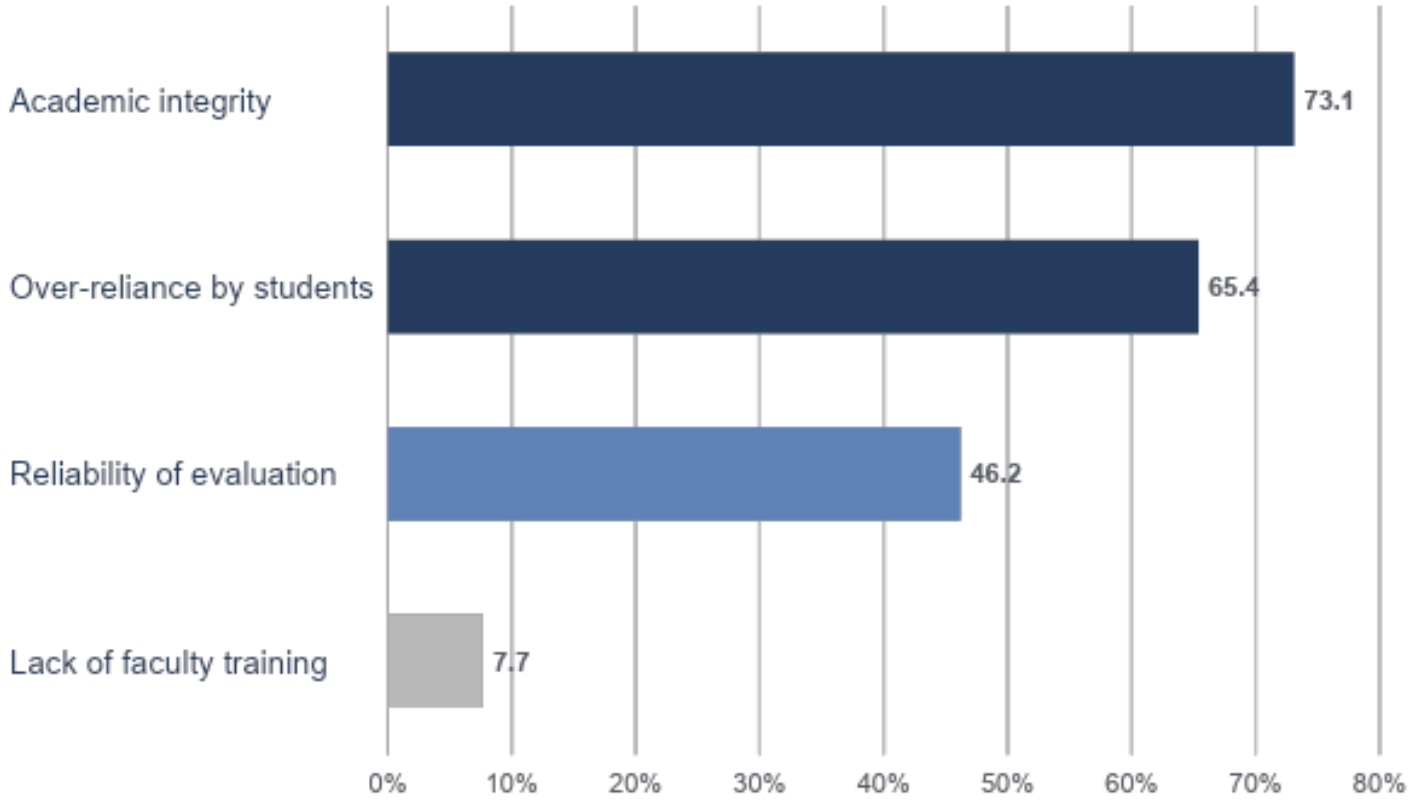


Figure 3 — Main concerns regarding AI in assessment.

WHAT IT MEANS

- Integrity leads (73.1 per cent), but over-reliance (65.4 per cent) and reliability (46.2 per cent) are close behind.
- Taken together they describe one problem: the traditional assignment no longer proves individual reasoning.
- That is a question of assessment design, not of policing misconduct.
- Detection tools do not fix an instrument that has stopped measuring.

AI raises the value of critical thinking and ethical judgment

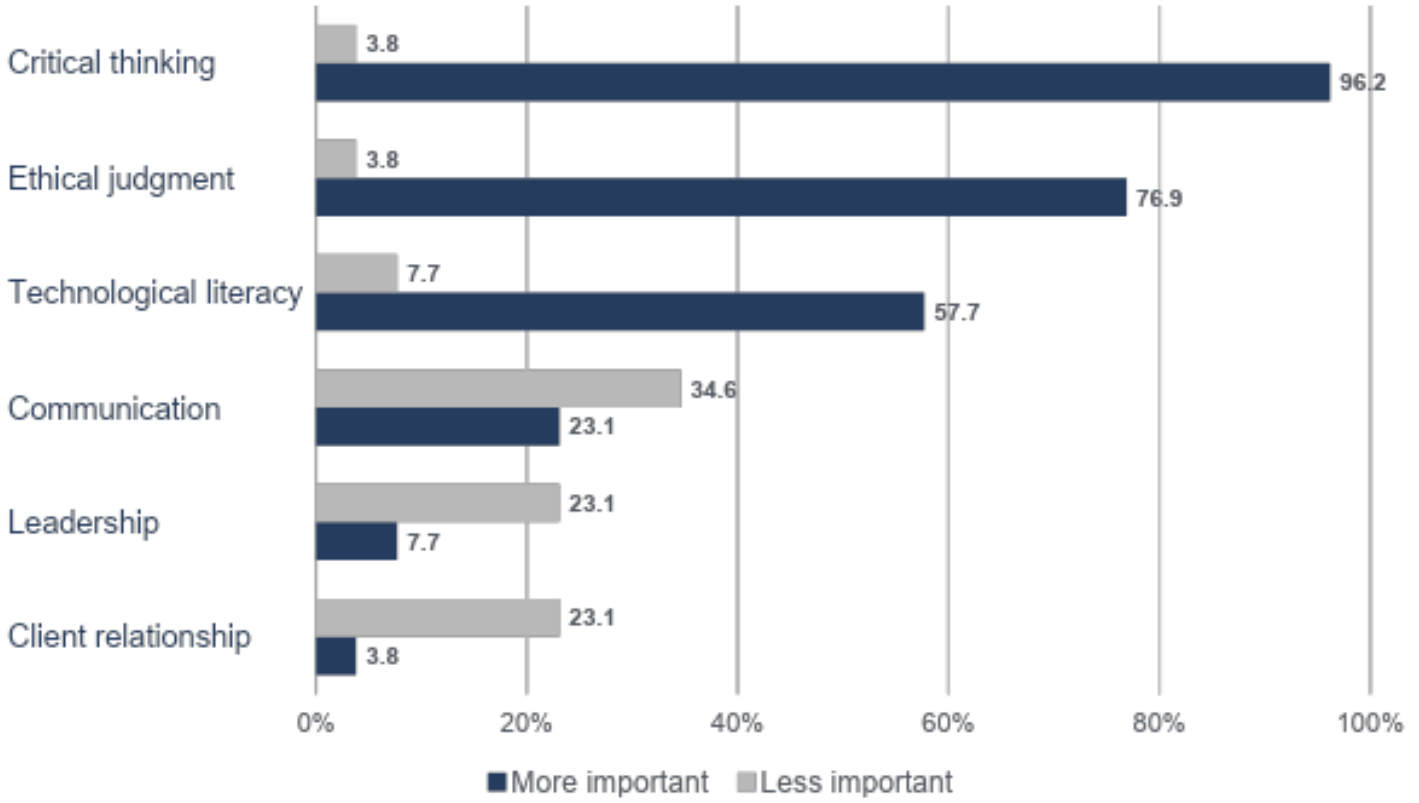


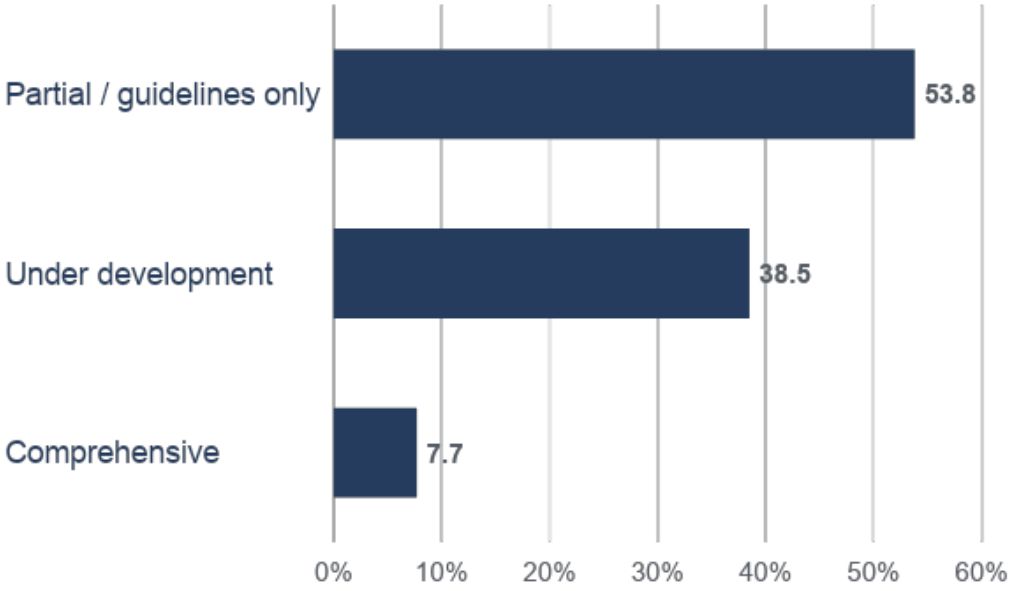
Figure 4 — Skills becoming more or less important because of AI.

WHAT IT MEANS

- No evidence of humans being substituted. The premium moves to judgement over machine output.
- Critical thinking 96.2 per cent, ethical judgment 76.9 per cent, technological literacy 57.7 per cent.
- Communication, leadership and client relations split the room, the uncertainty is about how roles get redistributed.
- The emerging profile: technical competence plus the capacity to question, contextualise and take responsibility.

AI governance is emerging, but narrow in scope

Policy status



Main subjects addressed

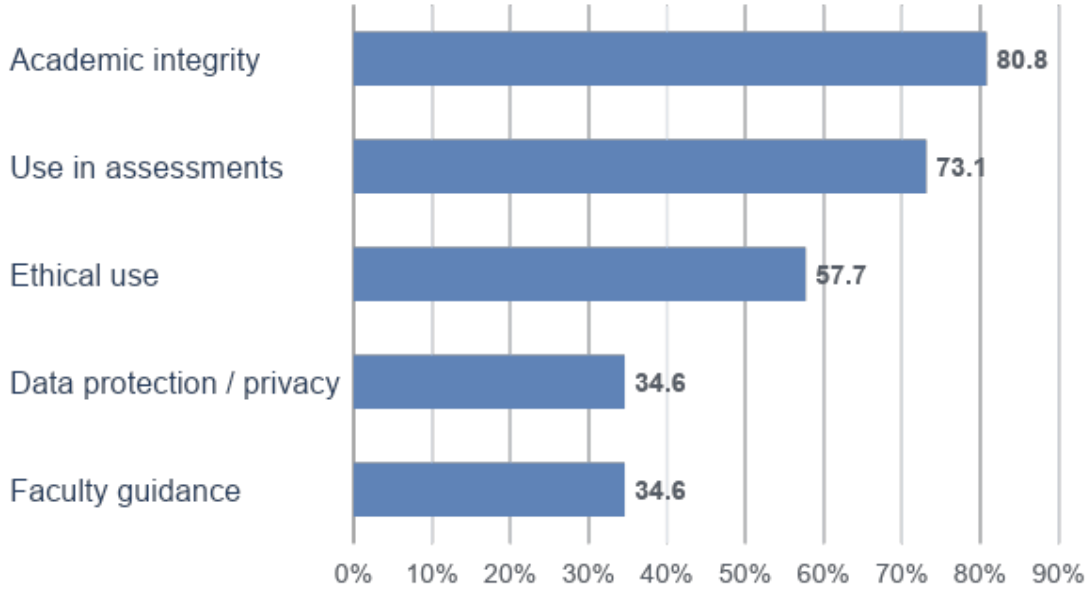


Figure 5 — Status and principal focus of institutional AI policies.

Only 7.7 per cent have a comprehensive policy. Where rules exist they cover exams and integrity.

The 2020 pillars hold — technology and skills need an update

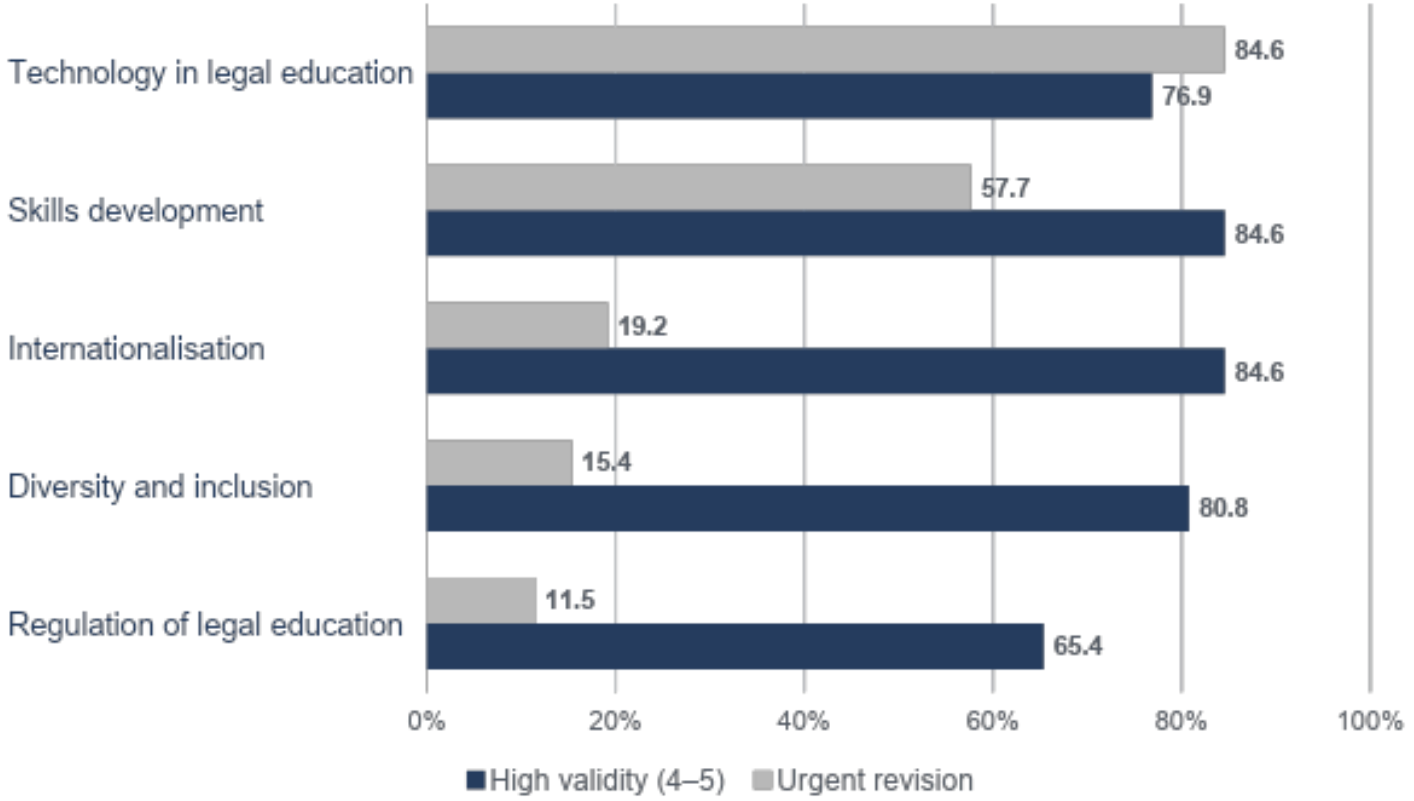


Figure 6 — Continued validity of the 2020 pillars and perceived urgency of revision.

WHAT IT MEANS

- All five pillars still command support. Nothing in the 2020 architecture has collapsed.
- Technology: 76.9 per cent valid, 84.6 per cent urgent.
- Skills: 84.6 per cent valid, 57.7 per cent urgent.
- Internationalisation and diversity and inclusion (D&I) stay strongly validated with low urgency.
- Rebalance the framework; do not replace it.

Six conclusions, stated plainly

1. **Adoption is asymmetrical.**

   Students lead, faculty follow, institutions arrive last.

2. **Presence is not integration.**

   Almost every school teaches AI. Almost none requires it.

3. **Assessment is a design problem.**

   Not a discipline problem, and not a detection problem.

4. **The premium moved to judgment.**

   Critical thinking, ethics and supervision of machine output.

5. **Governance is reactive and narrow.**

   Exams and integrity first; privacy, bias and procurement later.

6. **The framework holds; the balance does not.**

   Rebalance around technology and skills.

What this means for universities

Five decisions that belong to deans and academic leadership, not to IT

1. **Train the faculty, and make it compulsory.**
   The adoption gap is on the teaching side. Optional workshops have not closed it anywhere.

2. **Move AI and AI ethics out of electives and into the core.**
   A competence the market treats as baseline cannot sit in a course two-thirds of students never take.

3. **Redesign assessment before defending it.**
   Orals, continuous in-person problem-solving, supervised simulations and credit for process, not only product.

4. **Write governance that goes past integrity.**
   Data protection, procurement, algorithmic bias, disclosure rules and real support for teaching staff.

5. **Baseline now and re-measure every year.**
   This survey is a benchmark. Institutions that cannot show movement against it will be overtaken.

What this means for the legal market

The consequences that arrive in firms, in-house teams and client relationships first

The training ladder loses its bottom rung

The research, review and first-draft work that taught juniors judgment is the work AI does first. Firms have to build that judgment another way.

You will hire tool-fluent, supervision-untrained lawyers

Only 19.2 per cent of schools require AI teaching. Fluency will be self-taught; the discipline of checking output will not be.

Recruitment criteria move

96.2 per cent of schools say critical thinking now matters more. Screen for reasoning, ethics and the ability to supervise, not for recall.

Value shifts to verification and accountability

What clients pay for is the person who takes responsibility for the answer. Price and staff the review, not the drafting.

Competence now includes technological competence

Duties of competence, confidentiality and supervision already cover the use of these tools. Regulators are catching up, not inventing.

What this means for bars and regulators

THREE CHANGES WORTH MAKING

- Accredit on outcomes, not inputs. Recognise digital literacy, data analytics and ethical supervision of AI as legal competencies.
- Open flexible pathways for dual degrees: Law with Data Science, Business or Technology.
- Test judgment in licensing. 96.2 per cent and 76.9 per cent of law schools point to critical thinking and ethics; generative tools already pass the recall test.

THE RISK OF DOING NOTHING

- Accreditation becomes the binding constraint on innovation rather than its guarantee.
- Qualification standards certify skills the market has already stopped paying for.
- The gap between what is licensed and what is practised widens and consumers carry the risk.

2026–2030: continuing the IBA–LSGL collaboration

A periodic re-measurement rather than a one-off report, so guidance for legal education keeps pace with changes in professional regulation and legal services.

Three things to take away

1

The gap is institutional

Students already use AI at a level faculty and administration have not reached. Closing it is a management decision, not a technology one.

2

The exam is the pressure point

If the assignment no longer proves individual reasoning, the credential it supports is weaker – and the profession inherits that.

3

Judgement is the product

The competence that gains value is the capacity to question, contextualise and take responsibility for AI-assisted work.

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Updating the IBA Blueprint on Global Legal Education – A Rapid Global Assessment in the Age of AI · Law Schools Global League, 2026