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# The New Quality of Teaching Law at Polish Universities: The Concept and Implementation<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

The objective of this article is to present a new approach to legal education, which laid the foundations of the law curriculum at the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra. The concepts of legal education in Polish literature are presented in the first section of the article. The second part presents doubts connected to the prevailing model of teaching law at Polish universities – general studies (theoretical education). The next section presents the concept of teaching law at the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra, based on the concept of practical studies. There are presented solutions to improve the practical education and professional prospects of students. The implementation of this concept is provided in the fourth section. There are presented effects of certain solutions (presented in the third section) after the end of the first cycle of law studies at the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra.

**Keywords:** legal education, teaching law, Institute of Law Studies at the University of Zielona Góra, Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra, law curriculum, case solving, case study, preparing for practical legal training, law student.

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# Nowa jakość nauczania prawa na polskich uniwersytetach: koncepcja i wdrożenie

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## Streszczenie

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie nowego podejścia do kształcenia prawniczego, które stworzyło podstawy programu nauczania prawa na Wydziale Prawa i Administracji Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego. Koncepcje edukacji prawniczej w polskiej literaturze przedmiotowej przedstawione są w pierwszym podrozdziale artykułu. Druga część zawiera omówienie wątpliwości związanych z przeważającym modelem nauczania prawa na polskich uniwersytetach, czyli ze studiami ogólnymi (kształcenie teoretyczne). Kolejny podrozdział przedstawia koncepcję nauczania prawa na Wydziale Prawa i Administracji Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego w oparciu o koncepcję studiów praktycznych. W tej części zaprezentowane są rozwiązania pozwalające na poprawę kształcenia praktycznego i perspektywy zawodowe studentów. W podrozdziale czwartym przedstawione jest wdrożenie tej koncepcji. Omówione są tam skutki pewnych rozwiązań (pokazanych w trzeciej części artykułu) po zakończeniu pierwszego cyklu studiów prawniczych na Wydziale Prawa i Administracji Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kształcenie prawnicze, nauczanie prawa, Instytut Nauk Prawnych Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, Wydział Prawa i Administracji Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, program studiów na kierunku prawo, kazuistyka, kazusy, przygotowanie do aplikacji prawniczych, student prawa.

## Introduction

The model of legal education in Poland has been discussed both in literature and among academic teachers. The objective of this article is to present a new approach to teaching law, which laid the foundations of the law curriculum at the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra.<sup>3</sup> This article is a continuation of two other, previously published, papers.<sup>4</sup> The concepts of legal education in Polish literature are presented in the first section of the article. The second part presents problems connected to the prevailing model of teaching law at Polish universities. The third section presents the concept of teaching law at the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra. The implementation of this concept is presented in the fourth section.

## The Concepts of Legal Education in Polish Literature

There are two competitive concepts of legal education in the Polish literature. The first one is called the concept of university studies,<sup>5</sup> general studies<sup>6</sup> or theoretical education.<sup>7</sup> According to this concept, legal studies should be to a large extent theoretical and they should shape students by equipping them with knowledge. Hence the focus is on theoretical and historical subjects, whereas studying practical aspects of the job is left until training done upon graduation.<sup>8</sup> This model of education is aptly presented by J. Wróblewski (1981), who summarises it as follows:

<sup>3</sup> The author developed the curriculum which is available at [http://www.wpa.uz.zgora.pl/index.php?option=com\\_djtabs&view=tabs&tab=1&Itemid=123&lang=pl](http://www.wpa.uz.zgora.pl/index.php?option=com_djtabs&view=tabs&tab=1&Itemid=123&lang=pl) (access: 26.08.2020).

<sup>4</sup> P. Mysiak, *O racjonalnym egzaminowaniu*, [in:] J. Mazurkiewicz (ed.), *Egzamin powinien mieć sens i być sprawiedliwy: o egzaminowaniu studentów prawa, kandydatów na aplikantów, aplikantów, doktorantów i innych prawników*, Wrocław 2013, pp. 83–87; idem, *O nowej jakości w kształceniu prawników*, "Studia Prawa Publicznego" 2015, 1(9), pp. 205–213.

<sup>5</sup> A. Szwarc, *Problemy kształcenia prawniczego (wprowadzenie do dyskusji)*, "Państwo i Prawo" 2010, 1, pp. 3–4; E. Borkowska-Bagieńska, *Wokół reformy studiów prawniczych*, "Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny" 2013, 4, pp. 5–8.

<sup>6</sup> J. Wróblewski, *Modele prawnoznawstwa a typy kształcenia prawniczego*, "Państwo i Prawo" 1981, 4, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> F. Zoll, *Przyszłość kształcenia prawników w Polsce*, "Państwo i Prawo" 2010, 6, pp. 24–25.

<sup>8</sup> A. Szwarc, op. cit., pp. 3–4; E. Borkowska-Bagieńska, op. cit., pp. 5–8.

- 1) students should be introduced into scientific research by providing them with methodology, techniques and knowledge
- 2) education is theoretical by definition and is closely related to philosophy and methodology as well as to other social and human sciences
- 3) while studying, students are supposed to learn methods and techniques of legal reasoning, whereas professional skills are acquired later during the training period.<sup>9</sup>

Postulating such a model, E. Borkowska-Bagieńska (2013) points out that legal studies must equip a lawyer with necessary moral, culture-forming and additional intellectual qualifications by putting emphasis on historical, general and theoretical subjects.<sup>10</sup> Supporting the concept of university education, A. Szwarc (2010) indicates that it gives one more freedom of choice and a subsequent career change.<sup>11</sup>

The second concept of legal education is called specialised,<sup>12</sup> practical<sup>13</sup> or vocational education.<sup>14</sup> J. Wróblewski aptly points out three theses concerning this concept which can be summarised as follows:

- 1) the purpose of legal university education is to prepare highly qualified specialists to meet social needs
- 2) the basic education requirement is the knowledge of law and the principles of its application
- 3) legal education should prepare one for specific types of legal professions.<sup>15</sup>

As E. Borkowska-Bagieńska aptly points out, this concept is generally supported by representatives of dogmatic disciplines (civil, criminal, administrative, procedural lawyers) and heavily criticised by representatives of theoretical disciplines (theoreticians and philosophers of law, historians of Roman, constitutional and judicial law as well as doctrinal historians). The author criticises the above-mentioned concept and compares it to education at the infamous Teodor Duracz Central Law School.<sup>16</sup> A very interesting concept of practical legal education was presented by

<sup>9</sup> Wróblewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–27.

<sup>10</sup> E. Borkowska-Bagieńska, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> A. Szwarc, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>12</sup> J. Wróblewski, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> F. Zoll, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>14</sup> A. Szwarc, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4; E. Borkowska-Bagieńska, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–8.

<sup>15</sup> J. Wróblewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>16</sup> E. Borkowska-Bagieńska, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–7. The school was founded after the war by the communist authorities to educate new judges and prosecutors. It gave one a chance to gain legal education

W. Osiatyński (2002) who suggested eliminating separate theoretical and historical subjects and recommended using specific examples therefrom within the curriculum of dogmatic subjects (for instance, by showing the evolution of a particular institution).<sup>17</sup> Such a concept seems to be extremely interesting, yet hard to implement.

## The Problems Connected to the Concept of General Studies

The concept of general studies prevails at Polish universities. Many law scholars claim that theory is a basis for everything and deny the necessity of practical education at university.

The concept of general studies generates a number of negative consequences. The first one is personal: students graduate from university at the age of 25 and have to take up practical professional training. Their skills, as far as the practical application of law is concerned, are relatively low, which entails limited options of employment. Since it is frequently connected with additional costs, it is hard to continue practical professional training without one's parents' financial support. Therefore, financial reasons may determine the time when such individuals start their own families. There is no doubt that such a concept of studies provides a much better foundation for later academic work. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that an academic career is chosen by a small percentage of students, especially when one considers the fact that employment opportunities at university are becoming smaller and smaller these days.

Another consequence of such an approach is creating an artificial barrier between studies and practical professional training. During the training period, it turns out that the attitude towards the application of law is radically different. Trainees are likely to hear that while studying, 'you were taught theory, whereas we deal with craftsmanship.' Some practitioners call themselves craftsmen, which gives a pejorative meaning to the term 'theoretician'. This situation sometimes makes early-stage trainees frustrated. For five years, they have been being taught to take a broader look at law, from the perspective of its goals, whereas the practical application of law starts to be perceived as something completely different.

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of rather poor quality in a short time. It was possible to study there even without having passed the matura exam.

<sup>17</sup> W. Osiatyński, *Czy każdy prawnik musi być uczonym?*, [in:] A. Turska (ed.), *Humanizacja zawodów prawniczych a nauczanie akademickie*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 67–70.

## The New Concept at University

Taking into consideration changes in the application of law within the last few decades, as well as social conditions, today's model of legal education is in need of reform. These issues are worth raising to understand them better.

The Polish system of legal education is becoming accustomed to a new legal reality relatively slowly. The main reasons for that are fast changes and a constantly growing number of regulations. It was noticed by A. Sobczyk (2014) who gave an example of social insurance issues taught at legal studies. The author aptly points out that due to various factors, our knowledge in this area is getting outdated very quickly. This poses a serious teaching problem, since settling specific cases requires a knowledge of abrogated and temporary regulations. Even though this area is of extremely social significance, it is not very popular with students. Considering the scale of changes, the knowledge that they acquire may become outdated while they are still at university.<sup>18</sup> Another problem related to the issue is a certain tradition of teaching subjects. At the time when law did not change so frequently and electronic legal information systems were not available, students were required to demonstrate a literal knowledge of regulations. Nowadays, this anachronism is sometimes still being used.

And here comes the next problem. An increasing number of legal regulations makes it necessary to select what we will teach our students. Some areas need to be regarded as more or less relevant, which is always a difficult decision to make.

Yet another issue is human factor, meaning students themselves. According to law, a considerable number of courses must be elective, but the students frequently make their choices, considering specific, short-term criteria. Difficult subjects are hardly ever selected. Experience shows that even ambitious students tend not to choose such courses. Their motivation is to obtain better grades, which often determines their chances of getting a scholarship. It seems paradoxical, but it is the system itself that generates such behaviours. Less ambitious students make such choices for obvious reasons. Even if there are several passionate individuals, it is usually not enough to start a particular course. As a result, academic teachers who need to run a definite number of classes lower the credit criteria to a minimum, which undoubtedly affects the quality of education.

One more problem of elective courses is their often fragmentary and specific nature. It is very unlikely that after graduation, students will have a chance of using the gained knowledge and skills in practice. Therefore, it is much better to replace

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<sup>18</sup> A. Sobczyk, *W sprawie kryzysu edukacji z zakresu ubezpieczeń społecznych na studiach prawniczych*, "Ubezpieczenia Społeczne" 2014, 2, pp. 14–19.

such knowledge with skills necessary to apply the knowledge of the basic dogmatic fields to practice.

It also seems relevant to make students ready for legal training. In Poland, it is traditionally assumed that since a number of students decide not to start training upon graduation, there is no point in running such classes. The students should handle the issue themselves.

It is also worth drawing attention to a huge difference in mentality between lecturers and students, which results from social changes caused by technology. The youth of today, called 'digital natives', perceives the world in a completely different way. It is visible in various aspects. More and more students are giving up traditional books or making notes (many students attending lectures use laptops not only to take notes, but also to have access to other materials). It also influences the way that they understand the world. Nowadays, it is not a problem to find information, but to select it. Easy access to data by means of legal information systems or the internet causes new problems and gives new possibilities. Lawyers used to have difficulty in finding information, they had to use different combinations of regulations and their offices were piled with journals of laws. These days, legal information systems make it easy to determine the legal status by a given date, and under each article, there are many references with additional information, such as comments, judicial decisions and literature. It must change the way of teaching at universities; at present, it is difficult to single out general principles in many areas, the knowledge of which will let a lawyer predict the content and sense of legal regulations. Within the last few decades, these principles have undergone numerous revolutions and eroded for the benefit of frequently incoherent detailed regulations. It is also relevant that easy access to legal information makes it necessary to develop skills to process that information. That is why it is so important to put more emphasis on the ability to apply law in particular cases while still at university. Together with academic teaching, it will help one to develop the ability to select useful information in a given legal status.

Equipping a lawyer with necessary moral, culture-forming and additional intellectual qualifications is undeniably desirable, but these issues cannot dominate the curriculum. Since a lawyer should be mainly a professional, it seems relevant to limit general education for the benefit of specifically oriented education.

The law curriculum at the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra was designed to focus on the concept of practical studies.<sup>19</sup> However, theoretical, historical and general subjects were left to the extent necessary.

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<sup>19</sup> In this part, the curriculum for cycle, which started in 2014 is presented. The subsequent changes are presented in the next section.

The curriculum consists of four sets of subjects: compulsory subjects, elective subjects, seminars and languages. The two most important sets will be discussed in detail.

The first one is a set of compulsory subjects and it consists of 37 subjects within 2,160 classes (lectures, practical classes and laboratory exercises). It is run during the whole period of studies. Its task is to equip future lawyers with necessary knowledge, skills and social competencies. We can say that these are slightly truncated traditional legal studies, corresponding to other faculties of law in Poland. While choosing compulsory subjects, we considered their practicability with reference to traditional legal professions. Because of different limitations, chiefly of a financial nature, the choice was sometimes very difficult. Emphasis was put on the basic dogmatic areas. We attempted to avoid thematically narrow subjects for the benefit of traditionally understood basic dogmatic areas and their main branches. Such an approach will equip future lawyers with the widest range of knowledge and skills which will constitute the basis for independent knowledge and skills expansion in the scope of more detailed (specialist) branches of law.

What is a novelty in our education system is the approach to elective subjects which are included in the second set. It was divided into two parts.

The first part – practical case study – consists of 24 subjects a 30-hour course each, conducted as practical classes, which means 720 hours altogether, run from the second year to the end of studies. Every student has to choose at least half of the practical case study subjects offered in a given semester. Such an extensive practical case study module is supposed to help students to understand the connection between the so-called craftsmanship and a slightly broader look at law presented mainly in lectures. Perhaps it will put an end to the ethos of law craftsmen who deny the sense of deeper reflection on law.

Compulsory practical classes also involve case solving. The case solving is only a part of classes within a given subject. By choosing additional practical case study classes in a given subject, students get the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and, above all, develop the ability to use law in practice.

Practical case study classes are intended to show students how to use their knowledge. While working on a particular case, the students acquire the ability to use law in practice. During these classes, we will develop the ability to draw up pleadings, contracts, legal opinions, as well as drafts of different kinds of substantive and formal decisions and other documents. Specific cases are supposed to enable the students to get ready for their jobs.

We offer practical case study referring to compulsory subjects in a given semester. For instance, there are two compulsory subjects in semester 8 (Commercial Law and European Union Law). Each of them consists of 30 hours of lectures and 30 hours



of compulsory practical classes and both of them are followed by an examination. In addition, we offer a 30-hour practical case study course in these two subjects; students choose one of them. This system entails a range of practical implications. Students cannot avoid difficult subjects.

By choosing practical case study in a given subject, students undoubtedly broaden their knowledge, which helps them to prepare for the examination. In such circumstances, even ambitious students do not have to risk of getting lower grades and losing a scholarship. Instead, they are given the opportunity to develop skills in the area that they are interested in. It helps to eliminate one of the most basic system problems connected with elective subjects which, according to law, have to constitute a definite percentage during the course of studies. In this way, they can be more useful for the students' professional development.

Legal studies usually offer elective subjects in particular branches of law, which is assumed to broaden students' knowledge. Considering the changeability of legal regulations, this knowledge may become outdated even before the students' graduation, whereas the ability to use specific regulations in specific cases will not. Now, when we are facing a growing number of legal regulations, it seems more appropriate to develop the ability to apply law and look for the right regulations rather than deepen the knowledge of the regulations mandatory at a given time. Offering elective subjects in particular areas has one more practical drawback. These subjects are treated by both lecturers and students as additional subjects, and as such, they are thought to be less relevant. Such an attitude affects the quality of education, as other subjects are considered more important. The credit criteria are deliberately lowered to encourage students to choose a given subject. In our curriculum, these are not subjects relating to other areas, but subjects which develop students' skills in connected compulsory subjects.

Another novelty, when it comes to legal education, is the second part of the second set of subjects – preparation for practical training. It consists of five subjects, a 90-hour course each, conducted as practical classes. They start at the beginning of semester 8 and last to the end of studies. Students are required to choose two subjects out of five.

It is commonly thought in Poland that legal studies do not have to directly prepare for practical training, as not all students decide to take it up upon graduation. It is believed that the studies are supposed to provide knowledge about law, but they are not expected to prepare students for a specific profession. Such reasoning should definitely be rejected. By giving the students a lot of choices, the current model of legal studies is very broad. In my opinion, it affects the final result. Unfortunately, the broader something is, the more superficial it becomes.

While constructing the model of legal education in Zielona Góra, it took me a lot of time to think about the issue and I finally decided to reverse the problem. The question that I asked myself was whether specifically orientated education, aiming at making students ready for traditional legal professions, will make them worse prepared for alternative paths of professional development. The answer was obviously negative. Training requires a comprehensive knowledge of law and a range of practical skills which give an excellent basis for the alternative paths of professional development.

Another argument against the traditional approach to the problem is the introduction of the National Qualifications Framework which requires students to gain social competencies in order to obtain further professional qualifications. It is hard to imagine a better way of meeting this demand.

Taking the above-mentioned arguments into account, we decided to introduce into the curriculum a set of subjects preparing for practical training. The aim of the course is to systematise and deepen the previously discussed material. The way of doing so will depend on the training chosen by a given student. Fourth-year students will already start to prepare for specific training, which will undoubtedly increase their chances of achieving professional success. Experience shows that students start to think about getting ready for training during the last semester. In my view, studies should give them the best future professional development opportunities.

A relevant novelty is the way of crediting this subject. The compulsory exam is a simulation of the exam for chosen training. In this way, we give students a chance to get familiar with such a form of an exam and to objectively assess their capabilities. Many young lawyers are afraid of the bar exams. The opportunity for self-testing is undoubtedly an element of mental preparation for such a challenge.

To sum it up, it needs to be emphasised that the changes that we wanted to introduce result mainly from objective factors. We balance the previous model of legal studies, the aim of which is to provide the broadest knowledge of law by putting more emphasis on the development of skills and the improvement of career prospects. We replace the model of comprehensive studies with a more specifically oriented one by providing students with slightly different choices.

The way in which the current system of elective courses functions significantly lowers the quality of education. The key to solve this problem is to combine elective subjects with compulsory ones. By developing a new educational concept, we wanted to give our students better prospects of professional development in the future.

## The Implementation

The Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Zielona Góra was established in 2014. The first cycle of law studies started in October that year. This cycle was based on the curriculum described above.

There were very few people with proper qualifications to conduct law studies in Zielona Góra. The staff of the new faculty came from all over Poland from different universities.

The new concept of teaching caused discussion at the faculty. Some of the faculty staff questioned the concept and proposed to change the curriculum completely. They intended to come back to the concept of general studies. Some of them have appreciated this approach after a few years and they actively participate in improving this system now. The curriculum was also criticised by scholars from other faculties because of the insufficient number of subjects connected to their disciplines. They also claimed that our curriculum is dehumanised.

Classes in the form of practical case study, almost not present at most Polish universities, caused many doubts. One assistant professor (NB solicitor) even asked me what he should do on such classes. After several years, some part of the faculty staff even has specialised in such classes. Some of them are so popular that their classes are attended by students who have not managed to sign up for them. All practical case study classes are conducted by staff with experience in practice, usually by active practitioners. The practical case study classes are co-ordinated with basic subject in the form of compulsory lectures and classes.

The new system of elective subjects was also questioned by some scholars from our faculty. The main problem was the absence of elective subjects in the form of a lecture, but the new system of choosing subjects proves to be effective (see section The New Concept at University). The choices of our students are presented in the table below, which shows what percentage of our students has chosen particular practical case study classes. The trends are recognisable. There are some fluctuations of trends on part-time studies. Students tend to choose practical case study classes connected to subjects that are considered to be difficult to pass (Table 1).

We have created a special unit in order to conduct practical classes of preparation for practical training (*Pracownia przygotowania do aplikacji*). Piotr Kapusta, PhD (active solicitor) has created a very dedicated group of staff for preparation for practical training. They have published textbooks for each semester.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> P. Kapusta, W. Trybka (eds.), *Przygotowanie do aplikacji prawniczych: testy, kazusy*, Vol. 1–3, Warszawa 2018–2019.

Table 1.

	2019/20 full-time	2020/21 full-time	2019/20 part-time	2020/21 part-time
<b>Semester 3</b>				
Prawo cywilne (część ogólna) – kazuistyka	71.43%	68.29%	0.00%	0.00%
Prawo konstytucyjne – kazuistyka	23.81%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Prawo międzynarodowe publiczne – kazuistyka	22.86%	26.83%	0.00%	0.00%
Prawo zobowiązań – kazuistyka	60.00%	73.17%	0.00%	100.00%
Wykładnia i interpretacja prawa – kazuistyka	21.90%	31.71%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Semester 4</b>				
Prawo karne – kazuistyka	79.05%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Prawo administracyjne – kazuistyka	20.95%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Semester 5</b>				
Prawo rodzinne i opiekuńcze – kazuistyka	31.00%	81.31%	62.96%	100.00%
Prawo spadkowe – kazuistyka	86.00%	77.57%	74.07%	100.00%
Prawo rzeczowe – kazuistyka	62.00%	25.23%	55.56%	0.00%
Prawo prywatne międzynarodowe – kazuistyka	21.00%	15.89%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Semester 6</b>				
Postępowanie cywilne – kazuistyka	84.00%	86.92%	62.96%	100.00%
Postępowanie sądowo-administracyjne – kazuistyka	25.00%	27.10%	0.00%	100.00%
Postępowanie administracyjne – kazuistyka	62.00%	56.07%	62.96%	0.00%
Postępowanie nieprocesowe z elementami prawa materialnego – kazuistyka	29.00%	29.91%	66.67%	0.00%
<b>Semester 7</b>				
Postępowanie karne – kazuistyka	69.66%	89.41%	100.00%	100.00%
Postępowanie egzekucyjne i zabezpieczające – kazuistyka	68.54%	74.12%	0.00%	100.00%
Prawo karne materialne z elementami postępowania karnego – kazuistyka	34.83%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Prawo finansowe – kazuistyka	26.97%	36.47%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Semester 8</b>				
Prawo handlowe – kazuistyka	79.78%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Prawo Unii Europejskiej – kazuistyka	20.22%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Semester 9				
Prawo pracy i ubezpieczeń społecznych – kazuistyka	65.00%	77.22%	100.00%	100.00%
Ochrona własności intelektualnej – kazuistyka	35.00%	22.78%	0.00%	0.00%
Semester 10				
Prawo upadłościowe i restrukturyzacyjne – kazuistyka	30.00%	58.23%	100.00%	100.00%
Prawo gospodarcze publiczne i ochrony konkurencji – kazuistyka	70.00%	41.77%	0.00%	0.00%

Source: Own work.

We had first graduates in 2019. The results prove that the system is effective. The average rate of success was 54.60% and ours was 58.00%. We are in the first place among small universities and our result is the seventh in Poland (out of 44 universities). 78.60% of our students applying for advocate training was admitted (the highest rate in Poland).<sup>21</sup>

Vibrant discussions about teaching law at our faculty have caused changes in the curriculum. Family law and private international law (as separate subjects), new subjects connected with tax law and two new practical case study classes were all added in 2015.

Compulsory practical classes were added to public international law, Polish law history of and world law history in 2016 (they were previously conducted only in the form of a lecture).

In 2017, we conducted an evaluation of the curriculum. We identified problems with both computer literacy and languages in the context of law, and therefore we created Legal Communication Laboratory and a special didactic unit for computer literacy in the context of law. The content of subjects connected to languages and computer literacy was changed. A new subject, Legal Management, replaced Psychology in the curriculum. The new subject is based on the PMI methodology of Legal Project Management. Penal tax law was also added to the curriculum.

We increased the number of hours of practice to 360 in 2018 in order to strengthen the practical dimension of study. As a continuation of this process, the number was increased to 720 hours in 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Ministerstwo Sprawiedliwości – Departament Zawodów Prawniczych, Analiza wyników egzaminów wstępnych na aplikacje: adwokacką, radcowską, notarialną i komorniczą 28 września 2019 r. <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/6656022a-4259-4f8a-906a-e6a521c65b95> (access: 26.08.2020).

## Conclusions

The general study concept in teaching law is prevailing at Polish universities, which has some significant drawbacks. This article presents the concept of practical study in teaching law. The curriculum of law studies at the University of Zielona Góra was based on this concept. The results after finishing the first cycle (2014–2019) prove that it is feasible and reaches the planned effects.

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