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## Evaluation of current applications on legal education

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### Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to evaluate current applications of legal education in Turkey. Bologna Process has brought about a new approach; not only the students but also the professors are adapting themselves to this new situation. Besides, the integrated education provides law students with the opportunity to attend some postgraduate courses during their undergraduate education. On the other hand, the use of foreign language in legal practice therefore, education in foreign language has become increasingly important. In this paper, a harmonized legal education in foreign language will be analyzed for both its positive and negative aspects.

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### 1. Introduction

Legal education in Turkey has a history of about 150 years. Istanbul University Faculty of Law had introduced legal education in 1874 as “Mekteb-i Hukuk-ı Sultani” in “Darülfünun-ı Sultani”. The first law faculty of the Republic of Turkey -“Ankara Adliye Hukuk Mektebi”- was opened by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Ankara on November 5th, 1925. Now, it continues to serve under the name of Ankara University Faculty of Law.

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Improvement of legal education has always been one of the main issues faced by the jurists in Turkey. Besides the basic legal training, this covers the importance of law in society and the functions of law, the technique and the methods of rules of law applicable to the situations form the basis of legal education in Turkey.

As of the year 2013, 75 law faculties grant legal education in Turkey in total. There are 31 law faculties in 103 state universities and 44 law faculties in 62 private universities, which have 40000 law students in total.

## **2. Bologna Process in Law Faculties**

Turkey has participated in Bologna Process in 2001. Since that day, faculties of law in Turkey have been trying to harmonize their current graduate and postgraduate programmes in the framework of Bologna Process. 15 of the 25 higher education institutions in Turkey, of whose application have been evaluated by the European Commission in 2013 were granted with “ECTS Label”. Besides, 29 of the 90 higher education institutions, of whose application have been evaluated by the European Commission in 2013 acquired “Diploma Supplement Label”. Most of these higher education institutions have faculties of law.

According to the competence profiles of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey, 240 ECTS is required for legal education which is equal to 30 ECTS per semester. The professors have criticized the hours of lectures and demanded more for their lectures. However, there are many opportunities for students who would like to deepen their knowledge; they can improve their skills by study hours out of class, preparation of presentations, participation in seminars, making research and implementation of precedents. The special course titled “Internship After 3rd Year” which may be taken during summer time will help them decide on their future career. In their 4th year, legal and criminal procedure may also be taught in various legal practices courses during which case studies take place by taking into account current legislation and court precedents.

## **3. Mutual /Concurrent Education**

Although their high scores from the Student Selection and Placement Exam, the students of other faculties cannot take legal education as a double major program or a minor program. Although we do not recommend it, law students can enroll in double major programs. Minor programs, on the other hand, are highly recommended to law students since they may help them gain expertise in law.

## **4. Integrated Education**

In the past, in İstanbul University Social Sciences Institute, graduate students, who wanted to obtain a Ph.D., could have attended the seminar lectures of the Doctorate Program. In Ankara University Faculty of Law, seminars are being organized during graduate education since 1940. Those seminars to which students were able to participate starting from their 2nd year, have been very helpful for them in getting used to research. In this system, 3 seminar certificates were required to be enrolled in the Ph.D. Program.

Recently, an integrated program has been offered to the 4th year class/last year students who have 2, 00 GPA and higher. Those students attend the lectures of a master’s program in “Private Student Status”. In this system, the lectures taken in the context of the integrated program will be adopted as the lectures of a master’s program. Students, who also attend other lectures of a master’s program, will acquire the right to receive the “Diploma of Master’s Without Thesis”. The students who would like to attend a “Program of Master’s With Thesis” are required ALES (Entrance Examination for Academic Personnel and Postgraduate Education) score.

## **5. Foreign Language in Legal Education**

The use of foreign languages in legal practice has become increasingly important for a long time. Therefore, education in a foreign language comprises an important part of legal education.

Like many universities in Turkey, İzmir University of Economics Faculty of Law, offers its students, who cannot submit any valid certificate (i.e. TOEFL) proving their proficiency with the English language, a one year compulsory “English Preparatory Course”. In case they fail from respective final exams, the students have the option to repeat this course again for one year or they can start their legal education right away. However, successful completion of this course is required for graduation. During their legal education, the students take “Legal English Course” each semester during their 4 year educational period. In the context of those courses, the students learn basic legal terms, legal correspondence like litigation petition and responsive petition and furthermore, they learn how to implement foreign legislation and international conventions into practice.

Finally, law students can take lectures on the second foreign language as elective courses during their education.

## **6. Mobility of Students and Professors**

Students’ and lecturers’ mobility can be realized through ERASMUS programs in many Turkish universities. Students can take advantage of getting education in a foreign country during both their graduate and postgraduate education.

Besides, many students and professors from foreign countries have visited Turkish law faculties in “Visiting Student Status” or “Visiting Researcher Status” in order to conduct research and to give seminars and conferences.

## **7. Conclusion**

Current applications have altered the classic legal education which is mainly based on lectures given by professors. This change is the outcome of the information era. Both professors and students, who can easily access the information, should together take active role in legal education.

Realization of active participation in the education of law students in accordance with the Bologna Process, provides that their acquired knowledge and experience will be permanent.

Mobility of students and professors improves international relationships and assists us in truly understanding different legal systems.

“English Preparatory Course” and “Legal English Courses” which are available each semester during whole legal education and “Second Foreign Language Courses” as elective courses will enable law students make international research and contribute in resolving international disputes.

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