

NEWS, STUDENT SCENE, LEGAL AI

Law schools ‘fail to teach students about AI’

P R E M I U M



AI is playing an increasingly important role in legal practice

A lack of technology teaching at law schools is leaving students “dangerously exposed” to a skills gap, academics warned yesterday.

Lecturers said that neither the Legal Practice Course nor its proposed replacement included mandatory teaching about cutting-edge legal technology.

They pointed out that artificial intelligence increasingly played an important role in various areas of legal practice, such as document review and due diligence exercises, with recent developments around blockchain technology having the potential to eliminate even basic functions such as “signing meetings” for clients.

There is particular concern that the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE), which the profession’s watchdog is aiming to introduce by 2020, ignores the subject of legal technology.

“The current LPC and the impending SQE only cover certain aspects of what it means to be a solicitor, and at present legal technology is not one of those aspects,” Adam Curphey, the head of innovation technology at BPP University

“This is a major gap given the current and future landscape of the legal services market, and one that needs filling immediately. Waiting until the introduction of the SQE is too late.”

His colleague, Jo-Anne Pugh, a director at the law school, acknowledged that vocational course providers had their own difficulties in keeping pace with advances in legal technology.

“The introduction of the SQE allows us to embed technology into our teaching in a way we have never previously been able to,” she said. “We intend to radically redesign our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in response to a clear desire from the profession to equip new entrants with digital skills.”