



**Háskólinn
á Akureyri**
University
of Akureyri

Legal Education at the University of Akureyri

Self-Assessment Report

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1 Introduction

The University of Akureyri (UNAK) has offered legal education since 2003. It is unique among law programmes in Iceland both in its structure and emphasis and also in its geographical location. The first eleven candidates for the B.A. degree graduated in 2006, and the first ten candidates for the M.L. degree graduated in 2008. In 2009, the first candidates graduated with a master level diploma in Polar Law. Between 2006 and 2009, a total of 76 candidates have graduated from the UNAK Faculty of Law, and in December 2009, 118 students were enrolled in the law programmes.

In its seventh year of operation, the UNAK Law Faculty has now established a distinct niche on the scene of legal education in Iceland. It is ripe for evaluation and welcomes necessary feedback in order to ensure fruitful further development.

The present self-assessment report attempts to describe and evaluate the legal education presently offered at UNAK. The self-assessment was carried out by a work group commissioned for this task in November 2009. The group was headed by the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) and consisted also of three members of the Faculty of Law, three law students, and UNAK's Director of Quality Management. Many others assisted the group by providing information and comments, including Björn Jósef Arnviðarson, Francesco Milazzo, Garrett Barden, Guðmundur Alfreðsson, Heiða Kristín Jónsdóttir, Ólafur Rúnar Ólafsson, Ólína Freysteinsdóttir, Steinunn Aðalbjarnardóttir, Úlfar Hauksson and Þórður Bogason. Two groups of students, one from the B.A. programme and another from the M.L. programme, participated in focus group interviews in December 2009, conducted by Sigrún Magnúsdóttir (the Director of Quality Management), Solveig Hrafnisdóttir (Head of Academic Administration) and Dagmar Ýr Stefánsdóttir (Director of Marketing and Public Relations). Ingveldur Tryggvadóttir wrote minutes and kept records for the work group. We thank them all for their valuable contribution to this work.

The report is framed around draft questions received from the Ministry of Culture and Education in November 2009 (*Spurningar til háskóla v/ytri úttekta (drög)*). The work group augmented this with a further chapter to provide necessary background information regarding the study programmes offered (section 2).

A special annex is appended to this report.

2 Study Programmes

Together, the various programmes in law offered at UNAK provide the academic rigour, intellectual stimulation, and practical knowledge to be expected from a law school that prepares graduates both for legal practice in Iceland and for wider participation in a dynamic, international labour market.

The Faculty of Law at UNAK offers a three year study programme leading to the B.A. degree in law and a two year graduate programme of legal studies leading to the M.L. degree.

UNAK also offers studies in Polar Law. These are studies concentrating on legal issues pertaining to the polar regions. Polar Law includes the following study options: a 120 ECTS M.A. degree, a 90 ECTS LL.M. degree; a 60 ECTS study at the master level leading to a graduate diploma; a 60 ECTS study at

the bachelor level leading to an undergraduate diploma; and individual courses leading to a certificate.

Formal course catalogue descriptions in English and Icelandic of each of these programmes and their learning outcomes, including links to individual course descriptions, can be accessed through the UNAK website at http://www.unak.is/lagadeild/page/lskor_namsogkennsluskra.

2.1 The B.A. Degree in Law

Law studies leading to the B.A. degree at UNAK are in many ways designed in a manner that is different from the conventional programmes at Icelandic universities hitherto. At UNAK we consider it critical to legal education that students learn not only what the laws are, but that they also have a solid understanding of *what law is*. Law and jurisprudence are thus examined in a context that is historical, social and philosophical in character. In the first year of studies, students are introduced to Roman law (SAG0173), legal history (SAG0273, SAG0373 and SAG0473), legal theory and interpretation (KEN0173 and SKÝ0173), foreign legal systems (SAG0273 and SAG0373) and international law (PJD0173), as well as foundational subjects in Icelandic law (HMD0173 and LÖG0173) and general academic skills (VGH0173). This provides the necessary historical and theoretical knowledge and skills in order to tackle the second and third year courses with a nuanced critical and analytical perspective. In the second and third years of studies, students examine European Law (EVR0173, EVR0273), constitutional law (SKP0173, SKP0273), human rights law (RÉT0173, RÉT0273), sociology of law (RFÉ0173), administrative law (SÝS0173), international private law (AER0173), legal ethics (SDF0173), the law of the sea (HAF0173) and some black-letter law subjects – Introduction to Criminal Law and Property Law and Introduction to Contract Law - with a substantial emphasis placed on theoretical and comparative context (IRE0173 and ISR0173).

Students also have the opportunity to and apply their legal knowledge and develop their practical legal skills in two moot court courses (one in Icelandic on Icelandic law and one in English on international or foreign law) (MFL0173 and MFL0273). There is also scope by means of two open courses (CPS0173 and CPS0273) and one workshop-based course (MST0173) to study cutting-edge legal topics. Towards the end of the second year, students choose a topic for their B.A. thesis and begin working on this well in advance of submission at the end of the third year (LOK0373 and LOK0473).

Students must complete 54 ECTS in order to be able to commence the second year of study. All B.A. courses are taught in intensive three week blocks, during which students devote themselves exclusively to one subject.

The B.A. degree provides an excellent academic basis for those who intend to continue to qualify as practicing lawyers. Moreover, the studies also provide a solid foundation for those who do not intend to pursue conventional legal careers but rather wish to focus on careers in related fields such as international relations and political science. The approximately equal balance between courses taught and examined in English and Icelandic prepares students for work in both the domestic and international labour markets.

2.2 The M.L. Degree in Law

It is at the graduate level of study leading to the degree of M.L. that students focus exclusively on Icelandic law to ensure that they are prepared for the Icelandic Bar examination and legal practice in

Iceland. This programme is open to graduates of the B.A. programme who have obtained an average grade of at least 7 in their undergraduate studies or a comparable qualification from another institution. The M.L. is taught exclusively in Icelandic as it is aimed at preparing graduates for legal careers within the Icelandic legal community.

The studies are highly practical and students study Icelandic rules of law and legal process in detail. There are three legal process courses covering civil procedure (EIN0173), criminal procedure (SAK0173) and enforcement of claims (FUL0173); and there are substantive law courses in contracts (SAM0173), torts (SKA0173), property (EIG0173), company (FER0173), labour (VIN0173), family (FÖL0173), constitutional (SKR0173), administrative (SÝS0273), tax (SKT0173), criminal (REF0173) and claims (KRO0173, KRO0273). In a 30 ECTS final thesis in a subject of their choice within any area of Icelandic law (MPR0173, MPR0273, MPR0373, MPR0473 and MPR0573), each student has an opportunity to further develop and improve their critical and analytical skills and to demonstrate their capacity to conduct extensive independent research at a level that would qualify them for doctoral study should they so wish. Many of the instructors on the programme are practising lawyers who bring a contemporary and practical perspective to the courses as well as encouraging positive interchange between UNAK and civil society. In particular, the opportunity is created for local stakeholders to be kept informed of the latest developments at the Faculty of Law and for students to learn more about the realities of local practice and build contacts that may be valuable as they begin their legal careers. The Faculty is currently working on agreements with private law firms and public institutions to develop a formal internship programme by expanding informal networks that currently exist.

All M.L. courses are taught in traditional full-semester format with continuous assessment spread throughout the semester. Students begin working on their M.L. thesis during their first semester, giving them nearly two years to ensure that they can produce the very highest quality of work.

2.3 The Polar Law Programme

The cutting edge Polar law programme offers a unique focus on the legal regimes, rules and processes pertaining to the Arctic and Antarctic. It is a programme of great contemporary relevance and application, when climate changes are having a dramatic effect on the Arctic and Antarctic, when the opening of the new shipping routes is becoming possible, when current and potential boundary disputes on land and sea remain unresolved, when issues and questions of national and local governance are moving forward on national and international agendas, and, last but not least, when multiple threats to the environment are sending serious danger-signals and calling for urgent measures. One of the interesting areas of study to which this programme can contribute concerns possible lessons that the legal regime for Antarctica could provide for solutions in the Arctic.

The Polar Law Programme focuses on areas of international and domestic law concerning the Polar regions. As well as providing a general introductory course on Polar law (HRI1074), courses are offered in the areas of: international law (ÞJÐ1072), including the law of the sea (HRT1078), environmental law and biodiversity (URL1073), and climate change management (LSH1072); the laws of and the laws protecting indigenous peoples and other residents of the arctic (SVF1074, STN1073, FBR1074); arctic human development (ÞLN1074); governance (international, local and indigenous) (ASÖ1073, HAH1073, STN1073, STG1072, and economies, industries and business in polar regions (HVV1076, SSS1074). Students in the LL.M. or M.A. lines also write a substantial thesis.

The annual [Polar Law symposium](#) is also integrated into the Polar Law programme and students' attendance, which is an integral part of their studies, is free of charge. Instructors include professors Guðmundur Alfreðsson, Niels Einarsson, Malgosia Fitzmaurice, Lauri Hannikainen, Tómas H. Heiðar, Lassi Heininen, Jon Haukur Ingimundarsson, Timo Koivurova, Joan Nymand Larsen, Natalia Loukacheva, Tavis Potts, Kári á Rógvi, David Vanderzwaag, and other leading academics and practitioners in the field of Polar law.

In this programme, UNAK is working closely with a number of other higher education institutions, both domestically and internationally. These include universities in Canada, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Alaska).

The programme is taught exclusively in English, meeting twin objectives of appealing to the widest possible student body and ensuring that the research conducted by the students can be disseminated to the widest possible audience. Students, particularly indigenous persons, are also encouraged to disseminate the results of their work in their native languages.

2.3.1 Studies toward a M.A. degree in Polar Law (120 ECTS)

The M.A. degree in Polar law is aimed at graduates with a bachelor's degree in a relevant field of humanities or social sciences. Students complete 60 ECTS of coursework and write a substantial master thesis (60 ECTS). An academic expert in the relevant field supervises the preparation of the thesis that should constitute individual and independent effort in a chosen area of specialization within Polar Law.

2.3.2 Studies toward a LL.M. degree in Polar Law (90 ECTS)

The LL.M. degree in Polar law is aimed at graduates with a bachelor's degree in law. Students complete 60 ECTS of coursework and write a master thesis (30 ECTS). An academic expert in the relevant field of law supervises the preparation of the thesis that should constitute an individual and independent effort in a chosen area of specialization within Polar Law.

2.3.3 Studies toward a graduate diploma in Polar Law (60 ECTS)

The graduate diploma is aimed at graduates with a bachelor's degree in law. Students complete 60 ECTS of coursework and graduate with a diploma at master level.

2.3.4 Studies toward an undergraduate diploma in Polar Law (60 ECTS)

The undergraduate diploma is aimed at undergraduate students who have completed at least one year (60 ECTS) of university studies at the bachelor level in a relevant field or a high school diploma plus significant relevant work experience. Students complete 60 ECTS of coursework and graduate with a diploma at the bachelor level.

2.3.5 On completion of studies

Studies in Polar Law prepare students for work in the public and private sectors; at different levels of government; with international organisations; in the NGO sector; with indigenous peoples in the Arctic; and with universities and research institutions. The LL.M. and M.A. also constitute good preparation for doctoral studies or further research on polar issues.

2.4 Challenges and limitations

The law programmes at UNAK have been developed against a background of significant economic difficulties and resource shortages. This has posed – and continues to pose – considerable and inevitable challenges for the few staff involved in developing these programmes. Examples include the low number of full time staff, who consequently bear a disproportionate administrative load, and shortage of funds to support research.

Nonetheless the unique programmes offered at UNAK have incorporated high standards of innovation and excellence. Despite very limited funding, the pioneering legal education at UNAK has demonstrated that it has the potential to rival not only other institutions providing legal education in Iceland but can also make its mark in the international domain. All of those involved in legal education at UNAK look forward to a brighter and an even higher quality future when economic conditions improve and greater resources are allocated to developing UNAK as a centre of excellence for legal education in Iceland.

2.5 Summary

It should be evident that the Faculty of Law at UNAK is offering unique and challenging programmes of study combining academic rigour with contemporary relevance in a changing world and dynamic labour market. The construction of the B.A. as a broad social science degree appeals to students with different interests, which in itself enriches the study environment. It opens doors to a wider range of academic or professional futures than a more classical black-letter undergraduate law degree and it also prepares students for full participation in a democratic society. Nonetheless, the M.L. provides the necessary academic and practical training to ensure that graduates are fully equipped legal professionals, competent to perform effectively within the Icelandic legal profession. The ground-breaking Polar Law programme firmly establishes UNAK as a centre of pioneering research and education within this fast growing, exciting and under-explored discipline and it provides a unique pool of graduates to research and advance knowledge, interests and human development in the Polar regions.

3 The relation between the study programmes and the role of the university

3.1 How do the studies (the contents of the programme and the teaching) fit the role (goal/emphasis/strategy) of the university?

The law programmes at the University of Akureyri (UNAK) fit neatly with the role of the university generally. In its strategy for 2007-2011 (see Appendix 1 and 2), UNAK describes its role, values, and future vision, and defines five strategic objectives for realising that vision. The objectives are: (1) a challenging and personal study environment; (2) innovative and rigorous research activities; (3) active contacts with the community; (4) international co-operation; and (5) maintaining an efficient organisational unit. The ways in which the law programmes serve these five objectives include the following:

- (1) *A challenging and personal study environment.* Students are challenged from the outset by courses in English and Icelandic that set high standards both for knowledge and critical thinking. The student-teacher ratio is extremely favorable, making for a personal and

supportive study environment. Students report very high satisfaction with the personal study environment.

- (2) *Vigorous research activities.* All faculty members in permanent full-time positions have earned a Ph.D. and are active researchers. The same is true of many of our visiting staff.
- (3) *Active contacts with the community.* Courses in the M.L. programme are taught by part-time adjuncts and temporary teachers who practice law domestically, both in private practice and in public service. This arrangement facilitates a two-way transfer of knowledge between the university and the professional legal community.
- (4) *International co-operation.* A good number of courses are taught by visiting teachers affiliated with universities outside Iceland. In some cases, these teachers also collaborate with UNAK staff members in research. The Polar Law programme is international, exclusively taught in English and most students and teachers come from outside Iceland. The law programmes attract more international exchange students than any other academic unit at UNAK. Icelandic law students have also made use of exchange agreements and studied abroad, e.g. in China, Denmark, and Latvia. Faculty members regularly teach abroad as well, as part of ERASMUS agreements and bilateral agreements with universities outside Europe. Students interviewed in a focus group in late 2009 reported with satisfaction that the strong international aspect broadens their horizons and “enlarges their world”. They also state that the international dimension of the B.A. programme was an important reason why they chose to study law at the University of Akureyri.
- (5) *An efficient organisational unit.* Alternate year teaching in the B.A.- and M.L. programmes reduces the cost of teaching by 30-40%, and enables these programmes to stay within their limited budget without compromising relatively small class sizes. Each of the three programmes in law (B.A., M.L., and Polar Law) has a coordinator who is responsible for its normal functioning. Students report satisfaction with the organisation of the studies, e.g. the practice of teaching B.A.-level and Polar Law courses in an intensive format.

As already mentioned, the 2007-2011 UNAK-strategy includes not only aims and objectives, but also more generally statements on the university’s role, values, and future vision (see Appendix 1). The law programmes were designed to be, and have developed, in accordance with these values and this role and vision.

For example, the value of progress and innovation is underscored by students who favourably report that the B.A. programme attracts law students that otherwise would not have studied law, and that the B.A. programme prepares students for working and studying internationally as well as locally. The programme’s emphasis on legal theory and on comparative and international law constitutes pioneering work in law studies in Iceland, and marks its unique character. Preparation for international careers will predictably be increasingly significant in the future, as Icelandic business and industry will continue to become ever more interdependent with the global economy. The programme’s emphasis on preparing students for working beyond the narrow confines of the Icelandic legal system is therefore both timely and important.

At the same time, the law programmes support a longstanding and important role of UNAK in that they deliver graduates who are more likely to establish professional careers outside the capital area

than graduates from universities in that area. In 2008, for example, the first group of students graduated from UNAK after five years of legal studies culminating in the M.L. degree. Nine out of these ten graduates work as lawyers today; three in Reykjavík, two in Akureyri, and four in other areas throughout Iceland.

3.2 How does the academic unit fit with other operations of the university?

Although the Faculty of Law has autonomy with respect to the content and structure of its programmes, law is conceived as a social science and thus has a natural home within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, which also includes the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Education (see Appendix 3). Interdisciplinary influences include some teaching by members of the Faculty of Social Science (e.g. professional ethics, legal interpretation, philosophy of punishment, writing and critical thinking), and research collaboration (e.g. a project named *Human Rights in Crisis*, 2009-2011). Preparations have also been made for collaboration between the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Education in the area of human rights in school curricula.

Generally, the law programmes have been a significant part of the University's evolution from a vocational college to a well-rounded academic community. Evidence for this includes the very active involvement of law students in the University's student organisation. Another case in point is the law forum (see section 4.1), which has provided a venue for researchers from other faculties to present their research to law students, to the UNAK academic community, and to the public.

The B.A. programme is taught in three-week blocks, where all assessment is completed within the three weeks (except for retakes). The fact that other programmes at UNAK do not employ this system makes it somewhat difficult to offer law courses as elective or core courses for students in other faculties. Nevertheless, students from other faculties do select law courses, and law courses are popular with international exchange students at UNAK. The block-teaching is also maintained because it has pedagogical advantages; it is viewed favourably by students; and it makes it possible to offer courses taught by international and other experts who live outside the Akureyri area and who would not be able to stay in Akureyri for a whole semester.

4 Research and the relationship between research and teaching

The nature of legal education means that a careful balance must be maintained between both theoretical knowledge and practical legal skills. In all cases, given the rapidly evolving nature of law and legal practice, it is fundamental to ensure that students gain the most up to date knowledge. To this end, it can broadly be stated the B.A. programme is principally staffed by teachers with strong research portfolios (both full-time and visiting professors), whereas the M.L. is staffed by teachers with extensive experience in the practice of law. The Polar Law courses are taught to a considerable extent by leading world experts in the respective fields, reflecting their innovative and ground-breaking character.

4.1 What is the status of research at the university in this academic field?

4.1.1 Staff research

The full-time B.A. teachers, Professor Timothy Murphy and Senior Lecturer Dr. Rachael Johnstone have strong international research backgrounds and continue to publish widely. Their research has appeared in peer-reviewed journals in the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Israel and the

Nordic countries. Professor Murphy has also published three books and has a monograph forthcoming with Oxford University Press, co-authored with Garrett Barden, a distinguished visiting professor and teacher on the B.A, entitled *Law and Justice in Community*.

Regular teachers in the B.A. programme who are formally based in the Faculty of Social Science, Professor Giorgio Baruchello and Dr. Sigurður Kristinsson, Senior Lecturer and Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, have also published and continue to publish extensively. The B.A. programme is also enriched by visiting guest teachers, including, alongside the aforementioned Garrett Barden, Professors Guðmundur Alfredsson, Jakob Möller and Bertrand Ramcharan, all highly respected international scholars undertaking groundbreaking research in the fields of human rights and international law with a number of books to their names. The B. A. programme has also attracted visiting Fulbright teachers with strong research profiles, including most recently Professor Mark Weiner from Rutgers University, who delivered a very successful open lecture series on US constitutional law at UNAK during the Autumn semester 2009.

The emphasis in the M.L. programme is on preparing students for legal practice and Icelandic bar exams and to this end they benefit from teaching by experienced legal practitioners. By maintaining one foot in private practice, this group of respected teachers can ensure that their knowledge is always cutting-edge and can hence transmit the most up to date legal knowledge to students.

The Polar Law courses are taught by pioneers in their respective fields, with impressive international research portfolios. These programmes are intended not only to teach students but also to develop the state of knowledge in this underdeveloped field, thus it is fundamental to the programme that access is provided to the leading scholars in the field. The Director of the Polar Law Programme, Dr. Natalia Loukacheva, is a prolific researcher who has published extensively on issues regarding Arctic policy and law, including a book published in 2007 by University of Toronto Press entitled *The Arctic Promise: Legal and Political Autonomy of Greenland and Nunavut*.

The standard measure of research activity at UNAK is the annual assessment of research points. By March 1, each faculty member (Adjunct, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Professor) is expected to submit a report with evidence of his or her publications and other research activities in the previous year, and by June 1 they receive an evaluation in which the research activity has been quantified according to standard rules that take into account not only quantity of output but also quality of publication venue. To give a rough idea of how research activity translates into points, one article published in a respected, international peer-reviewed journal is assessed at 10 or 15 points depending on further qualifications of the journal.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average
Number of Law faculty reports	3	3	3	3	5	
Average research points per Law faculty	25,42	11,04	30,67	40,08	26,40	26,72
Average research points per SHSS faculty	20,74	17,62	16,57	26,56	20,88	20,47
Average research points per UNAK faculty	17,81	15,02	16,25	21,45	20,73	18,25

Table 1. Average Research Points per Faculty Member 2004-2008

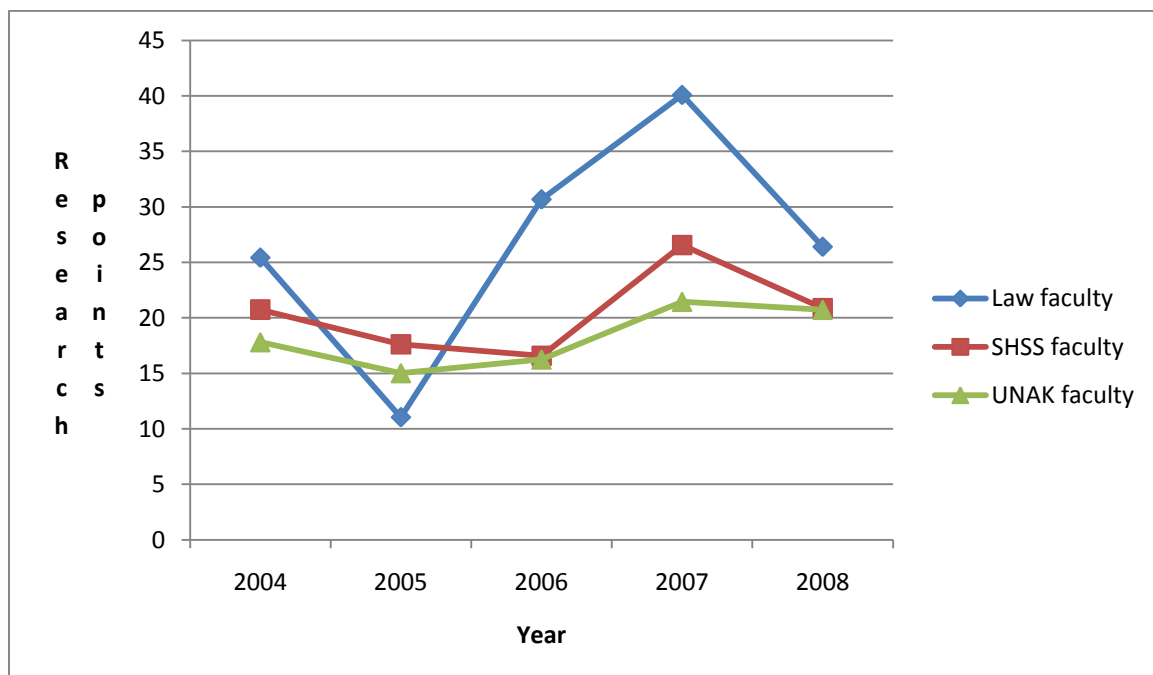


Figure 1. Average Research Points per Faculty Member 2004-2008

As shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, the members of the Law Faculty earned more research points on average in 2004-2008 than their colleagues within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) and UNAK. The average research points per Law Faculty in years 2004-2008 was 26,72, more than six points higher than the SHSS-average of 20,47 and more than eight points higher than the UNAK-average of 18,25.

4.1.2 Conferences and Publications

UNAK hosts the annual Polar Law Symposium, which is both free and mandatory for Polar law students, and other law students are also encouraged to attend free of charge. The first of these groundbreaking events was held in September 2008 (see Appendix 4) and the second in September 2009 (see Appendix 5). The third symposium is currently being prepared and will be held on September 7-10 2010.

The UNAK Faculty of Law is also home to the *Yearbook of Polar Law*, published by Brill Academic Publishers in the Netherlands (see <http://www.brill.nl/default.aspx?partid=210&pid=34474>). The *Yearbook* covers a wide variety of topics relating to the Arctic and the Antarctic. These include:

- human rights issues, such as autonomy and self-government vs. self-determination, the rights of indigenous peoples to land and natural resources and cultural rights and cultural heritage, indigenous traditional knowledge;
- local and national governance issues;
- environmental law, climate change, security and environment implications of climate change, protected areas and species;
- regulatory, governance and management agreements and arrangements for marine environments, marine mammals, fisheries conservation and other biological/mineral/oil resources;

- law of the sea, the retreating sea ice, continental shelf claims;
- territorial claims and border disputes on both land and at sea;
- peace and security, dispute settlement;
- jurisdictional and other issues regarding the exploration, exploitation and shipping of oil, gas and minerals, bio prospecting;
- trade law, potential shipping lines through the northwest and northeast passages, maritime law and transportation law; and
- the roles and actual involvement of international organizations in the Polar regions, such as the Arctic Council, the Antarctic Treaty System, the European Union, the International Whaling Commission, the Nordic Council, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the United Nations, as well as NGOs.

The first volume contains the presentations made at the first Symposium on Polar Law (September 2008), and the second volume will contain presentations from the second Polar Law Symposium (September 2009).

Smaller conferences are regular features of academic life at UNAK and these are always free of charge to students. The regular “lögfræðitorg” (law forum) which is open to all students and the public and which is mandatory for first year students, also provides the opportunity for students to consider legal issues in contemporary contexts; for example, recent fora have explored Iceland’s economic obligations, implications of EU membership and reviews of recent judgments. Presenters range from our own moot court competitors to world famous individuals such as Hans Blix and Shirin Ebadi. See Appendix 6 for a complete list of presenters since 2003 and Appendix 7 for sample programmes from smaller conferences.

In keeping with the research culture of the UNAK law department, and in the tradition of North American law schools, the law students at UNAK launched a law journal – *Lögfræðingur* – during the 2005-2006 academic year. The law student body elects an editor and editorial board annually and the journal, published each Spring, contains articles and commentaries by academics, practitioners and students. Despite economic circumstances, the journal has maintained a high level of support from sponsors and continues to grow and expand. This expansion has included the journal’s transition to becoming a fully peer-reviewed journal as of the fourth edition, which will be published in Spring 2010. This issue is scheduled to include work from the UK and the USA as well as Iceland. The journal is published in hard copy as opposed to online publication, and several hundred copies are widely distributed each year.

Students have also on several occasions made use of the opportunity to apply for and receive research grants from the Icelandic Student Innovation Fund (Nýsköpunarsjóður námsmanna).

4.2 What is the significance of teachers’ research for the studies?

In order that graduates be prepared for legal practice, employment in related fields or further study, it is crucial that students graduate with the most up to date knowledge possible, striking a balance between theoretical understanding and practical knowledge of specific legal rules and processes.

Students in the B.A. programme report satisfaction with the fact that teachers have specialized knowledge and are able to explore the area of their expertise with the students. In a focus group interview, students reported that when courses are taught in a research-led mode it is evident that

the teachers have a deep interest in what they are teaching, and their enthusiasm is transmitted to the class.

The Polar law programmes intend not only to transmit research innovations to students, but also to prepare them to undertake research of their own and thus move from being “consumers” of knowledge to becoming “producers” of knowledge.

Clearly, then, teachers’ research is vital to the aims and purposes of the study programmes, and it significantly enhances the quality of the studies.

4.3 How are research findings utilized in teaching?

Many of the teaching staff’s own publications are used in teaching materials and this is especially the case in Polar Law where there may simply be no other published material available. Students may also be asked to consider cases in which teachers have themselves been involved.

Published books and articles authored by teachers in the programmes appear regularly in course syllabi as required or optional readings. Such titles include Timothy Murphy (ed.), *Western Jurisprudence* (2004); Sigurður Líndal: *Um lög og lögfræði – Grundvöllur laga - Réttarheimildir*, 2. útg (2007); G. Alfreðsson and A.Eide (eds), *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1999; J. Möller and A. de Zayas, *Case Law of the United Nations Human Rights Committee 1997-2007: A handbook* (2009); Mikael M. Karlsson "Defeating the Inference from General to Particular Norms". *Ratio Juris* 8:3 (1995), 271-286; Rachael Johnstone “Feminist Influences on the United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies,” 28(1) *Human Rights Quarterly*, 148-185 [2006]; and Natalia Loukacheva, *The Arctic Promise: Legal and Political Autonomy of Greenland and Nunavut* (2007). A full list of staff publications used in our UNAK-law syllabi is provided in Appendix 8.

The self-assessment group discussed ways in which the faculty might do even more to make sure teachers’ research benefits students and teaching. In addition to assigning their own published texts as course material, faculty members might organise presentations at the law forum that would be specifically aimed at introducing research that teachers are currently undertaking but has not yet been published. This aspect of education would naturally be enhanced if more permanent staff were hired and research funding were increased.

5 The breadth and depth of studies

5.1 What is the balance between breadth and depth in the studies, i.e. between general and specialized aspects?

The B.A. and M.L. combined cover the standard range of law subjects, including the two main types of law course: first, the core subjects of Icelandic law; and secondly, a range of courses dealing with historical, theoretical, ethical, international and comparative aspects of law.

What is distinctive about the law study programme at UNAK is that it inverts the standard order in which these two types of courses are taught. The B.A. courses deal mainly with the historical, theoretical, ethical, international and comparative aspects while the later, M.L. courses cover the standard range of Icelandic law subjects, including contract, property, tort, family law, and civil and criminal procedure. Despite these distinctive qualities, the law study programme at UNAK is similar to law programmes elsewhere in terms of the balance between its general and specialized aspects.

One of the central philosophies underlying the study programme is that students are better equipped to master comprehensively the core subjects of Icelandic law (or of the law of any jurisdiction) if they first have an intellectual grounding in law's historical, theoretical, ethical, international and comparative aspects. It is important to note, however, that Icelandic law is nevertheless taught during the B.A.; as stated elsewhere in this report, there are courses that introduce students to the Icelandic constitution and legal system. However, the preponderance of Icelandic law is taught at M.L. level.

The programme therefore provides the opportunity to study law at B.A. level largely as an intellectual discipline and in that sense it caters extremely well – and certainly in a way that other law programmes generally do not – for students who wish to study law but not to enter the legal profession. These students number more than is often thought: in the UK, for example, the Lord Chancellor's 1994 report on legal education noted that less than half of all law graduates go on to become practising lawyers and that "university law degrees will continue to be the foundation for a wide variety of careers, not just the practising legal profession." (*The Lord Chancellor's Committee on Legal Education and Conduct – Review of Legal Education: Consultation Paper*, para. 1.21.) Graduates with a B.A. degree in law from UNAK receive a broad education that prepares them for a variety of careers and fields of graduate study.

The international and comparative approach to legal study which is central to the B.A. also has practical implications for graduates who emerge with the ability to work within the legal frameworks of the main European jurisdictions. In contrast to the traditional law school which focuses on training students for practice within a particular domestic legal system, UNAK ensures that its graduates have a solid understanding of the foundations of the principal legal systems in the European Economic Area (EEA). Through courses on Roman Law (SAG0173), Civil Law (SAG0273) and Common Law (SAG0373), students develop an understanding of the historical and contemporary institutions of other European legal systems and develop the skills necessary to find, interpret and apply sources of law within these jurisdictions. In addition to public international law (PJÐ0173), B.A. students take two full courses on European Law (EVR0173, EVR0273), covering both institutional issues and substantive European law. In the comparative courses on contract law (ISR0173) and on property law and criminal law (IRE0173), students also learn the main principles of these fields in English, German and French law as well as in Icelandic law. (These subjects are studied in depth in Icelandic law in the M.L.) The course on international private law (conflict of laws) (AER0173) also trains students in identifying both the jurisdiction and the law applicable to any international private law dispute. Around 50% of the B.A. is taught and assessed in English. This assists our students to make the transition from informal oral communication in English to confident, professional English communication in both written and spoken form. Regardless of whether Iceland pursues further integration with the European Union, Iceland will continue to be engaged in substantial international trade and business. For this reason, at UNAK it is considered crucial that graduates are properly equipped to operate in an international legal environment.

On the other hand, those who aim to enter the legal profession domestically may do so by undertaking the study of Icelandic law at an intellectually advanced level. This in turn allows them to become extremely competent lawyers with a heightened awareness of legal history and legal theory and a particularly strong grasp of law's ethical, international and comparative dimensions.

6 Target group

6.1 Does the study programme target a defined group of students?

The B.A. programme is aimed at students who are interested in law as a theoretical subject that includes perspectives from social science and political science, as well as an international perspective. The programme also targets students who want to study law but do not want to close their options for graduate study or work in related fields. At the same time, it is very important for the programme to attract students who are well prepared academically; the programme therefore emphasises the admission requirement that students must have completed their secondary school diploma (*stúdentspróf*).

The master programmes in Polar Law are designed for students who seek theoretical as well as practical background in the range of legal issues relevant to the Polar areas. Upon completion of the studies, they should be competent to embark on academic and other professional careers in Polar Law or in related fields, as indeed many of them plan to do. The coverage extends from human rights to the law of the sea, from environmental law to good governance, and from transportation law to security considerations. Although the emphasis is on law, much of the teaching is inter- and cross-disciplinary, and the programmes accordingly may admit students with B.A. degrees in disciplines other than law.

6.2 Does the university receive the students that it would most prefer?

Focus group interviews conducted in December 2009 indicated that current B.A. law students at UNAK strongly value the fact that the B.A. programme keeps various options open for further studies and careers.

The focus group interviews also indicated that students view the broad and international character of the B.A.-studies as an extremely attractive feature of the programme. Students in the M.L. programme report more satisfaction with the B.A. programme than the M.L. programme. This supports UNAK's policy of teaching law in an international comparative and theoretical framework.

Teachers report that law students at UNAK are generally bright, focused and enthusiastic about their studies. Comments from visiting teachers with experience of teaching at different universities are valuable in this regard. Dr. Garrett Barden, Professor Emeritus at Cork University in Ireland commented in January 2010:

Over several years and on several occasions, I have taught the first, second and third year students in the law degree in HA [UNAK]. During the 29 years from 1970 until 1999 I taught undergraduate courses in jurisprudence and philosophy in Ireland (Dublin and Cork), in France (Rennes), Slovakia (Bratislava), in the United States (Maine) as well as in Iceland (both in HÍ in Reykjavík [University of Iceland] and in HA in Akureyri), and have been external examiner at Undergraduate, Masters and Doctorate level in the United Kingdom (Coleraine, Edinburgh, Lancaster and Oxford). From my experience of students in those universities I can say that the quality of the students in HA is without doubt of the internationally accepted standard.

Professor Guðmundur Alfreðsson commented (January 2010) that:

the innovative approach to legal education at HA [UNAK] with the teaching of the historical, philosophical and ethical underpinnings of law, with coverage also of political science and sociology, makes the HA law programme quite unique. It is not only about what the law is, but also what it should or could be like. As a result, teaching in Akureyri is an interesting and challenging undertaking in terms of meeting active students who participate in class discussions and ask good questions.

Professor Francesco Milazzo, Professor of Roman law at the University of Catania, stated (January 2010):

Students looked very interested in my teaching although it is in some ways very strange to the historical and cultural tradition of their country. They looked as wishing to do their best in order to get into the subject that was ... their very first juridical subject.

The students in the Polar law programme, in their comments in class, in interviews, in course evaluations and in their choice of and research for thesis topics, have demonstrated thorough interest in the subject matter under consideration, and many of them plan careers in this relatively new and expanding field. There is not much more that a University can ask for. Students from throughout the Arctic regions have entered the programme, including government officials and indigenous persons, but it would further enhance the Polar law programme to draw more students like this, that is more of the people who make the law and more of those who have to live with it.

7 Scope and effectiveness

7.1 What size of student groups are the programmes organised to accommodate?

The studies are organised with a view to accommodating classes of 20-40 students. The occasional enrollment of more than 40 students in a course does not present a major problem, neither as regards teaching staff nor facilities.

7.2 What is the actual number of students?

The actual number of enrolled students per law course is detailed in Appendix 9. The average number of students per law course in Autumn 2009 was 35 in the B.A. programme, 22 in the M.L. programme, and 12 in the Polar Law Master Programmes.

The total number of students enrolled in the law programmes at the beginning of each semester is shown in Table 2 and Figure 2 (see also Appendix 10):

	Aut 2004	Spr 2005	Aut 2005	Spr 2006	Aut 2006	Spr 2007	Aut 2007	Spr 2008	Aut 2008	Spr 2009	Aut 2009
B.A.	45	39	68	62	72	67	61	59	46	57	69
M.L.					17	16	29	27	32	31	32
P.L.									10	19	17
	45	39	68	62	89	83	90	86	88	107	118

Table 2. Number of students enrolled in law programmes at UNAK

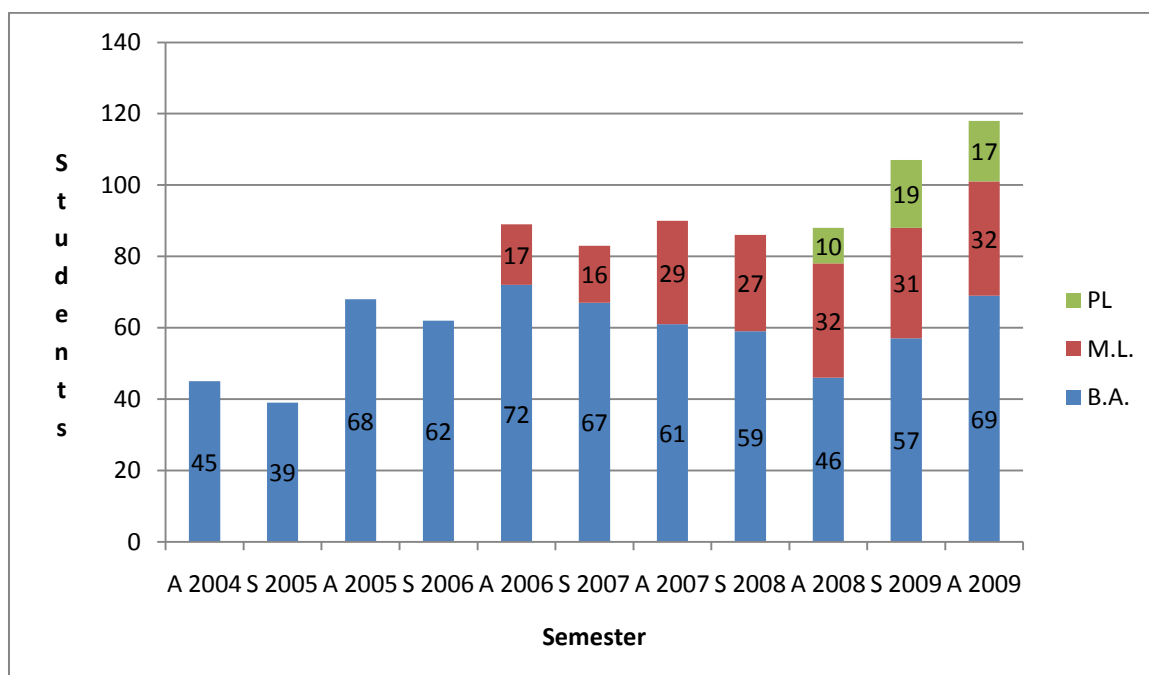


Figure 2. Number of students enrolled in law programmes at UNAK

The overall number of students has increased from 45 to 118 over the period shown. Having started in 2003, the B.A. programme had students in all three years of study for the first time in 2005-2006. The number in the B.A. programme grew slightly in 2006-2007 but declined in the two years that followed. The pendulum swung again, and the programme is now expanding strongly, with 69 B.A. students in Autumn 2009. The early fluctuations may be considered normal for newly established programmes. The two-year M.L. programme has had a steady enrollment of 15-17 students per year from its inception in 2006, and the Polar law programmes have had between 10 and 19 students in their three semesters of operation. Overall, legal education at UNAK is growing in terms of student numbers.

Another way to count students is to figure the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students per year by considering how many course credits are completed per year and dividing that number by 60, the number of ECTS units measuring full-time study for one year. For budgetary purposes, the actual number of FTE-students at UNAK is assessed and predicted in this way for each calendar year.

In September 2009, the number of FTE-students at UNAK in the general area of social sciences (including all courses and programmes offered by the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Business) was assessed and predicted as follows:

	2009	2010
Faculty of Business	246	243
Faculties of Law and Social Sciences combined	290	398
Total	536	641

Table 3. Expected FTE-students in the general area of social sciences at UNAK

7.3 What is the maximum number of students?

There is no formal maximum number of students admitted in any law course at UNAK. In the state budget for 2010, UNAK receives a contribution calculated to cover costs for 700 FTE-students enrolled in programmes in the general area of social sciences. As explained in section 7.2, this general area includes all programmes offered by the Faculties of Business and Social Sciences as well as the Faculty of Law. The student number assumed in the budget is not divided further for each programme.

7.4 How has the number of applicants developed?

The number of incoming students per year is set out in Appendix 10 and is presented in Table 4 and Figure 3:

Autumn	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
B.A.	20	29	31	22	16	35
M.L.			17	14	19	16
Polar Law					12	13
Total:	20	29	48	36	47	64

Table 4. Incoming first year students 2004-2009

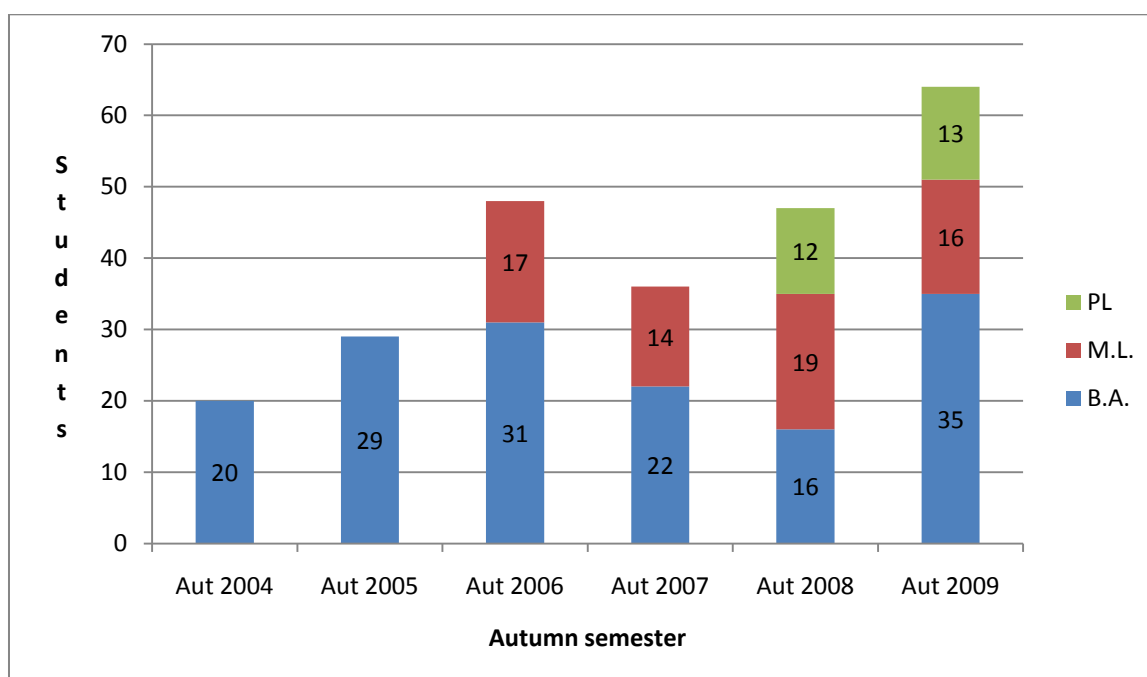


Figure 3. Incoming first year students 2004-2009

The Faculty of Law at UNAK is attracting a growing number of students again, having suffered a brief setback in 2007 and 2008. The large number of 35 students entering the B.A. programme in 2009 is especially noteworthy and it is anticipated that this trend will continue.

7.5 How well are the courses utilised?

The number of students per course is detailed in Appendix 9. It shows that on average, the number of students per course has been a little over 20. A notable increase is shown, however, for the current academic year, as the average number of students per course in the B.A. programme has risen to 35.

A number of arrangements are made to ensure that each course is well attended. The second and third year students in the B.A. programme are taught as one group, and this means that each course in the 2nd and 3rd year curriculum is only taught every other year. A course in the Law of the Sea is shared between upper level B.A.-students and students in Polar Law, as well as students in environmental studies from the School of Business and Science. Each course taught in English is available to international exchange students.

7.6 What is the average cost per student?

The average total cost per FTE-student 2003-2009 is detailed in Appendix 11. Table 5 presents the total cost per FTE-law student itemised by expense categories.

Totals	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Wages	5.468.217	13.670.543	24.684.439	41.144.173	46.483.587	65.131.447	73.533.047
Housing	2.285.336	4.446.377	5.669.497	9.504.833	12.031.627	14.594.991	15.803.504
Equipm.	514.462	1.227.336	1.887.295	2.165.257	2.114.207	3.208.631	5.094.976
Other	2.767.952	5.393.782	8.873.720	15.893.263	21.835.343	26.599.491	23.474.844
Sum	11.035.967	24.738.039	41.114.951	68.707.525	82.464.765	109.534.560	117.906.372
FTE-law students	14	33	47	72	90	105	113
Total cost per FTE-student	788.283	749.638	874.786	957.355	916.275	1.039.047	1.047.045

Table 5. Itemised Total Cost per FTE-law student 2003-2009 (in ISK)

Table 5 represents total costs. To better understand these numbers, keep in mind that the expense of running UNAK is divided into *direct expenses*, including wages, contingent accommodation and travel; and *overhead expenses*, including housing¹, computers and equipment², support services and administration³, and research⁴.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Wages	3.540.774	9.475.486	18.656.304	31.326.780	34.503.413	50.844.046	58.040.423
Accommodation	76.724	201.436	233.207	329.207	327.614	314.433	0
Other expenses	1.190.887	2.373.654	3.132.013	4.026.481	2.093.810	2.300.029	1.636.555
Total direct costs	4.808.385	12.050.576	22.021.524	35.682.468	36.924.837	53.458.508	59.676.978
FTE-law students	14	33	47	72	90	105	113
Local cost per FTE-law student	343.456	365.169	468.543	497.192	410.276	507.108	529.950

Table 6. Direct cost per FTE-law student 2003-2009 (in ISK)

¹ Management, maintenance, depreciation, finance costs, rent.

² The purchase and leasing of equipment, licences, data storage, etc.

³ Academic administration, library, technical support, marketing, administration.

⁴ Sabbaticals, UNAK's Research Fund, Arctic cooperation, staff bonuses.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Support service wages	1.927.444	4.195.058	6.028.135	9.817.393	11.980.174	14.287.401	15.492.624
Housing depreciation	557.886	1.057.917	1.270.151	2.098.147	2.641.196	3.187.947	3.455.237
Housing finance costs	1.115.771	2.115.833	2.540.301	4.196.295	5.282.392	6.375.893	6.910.474
Other housing costs	534.955	1.071.191	1.625.838	2.881.183	3.780.425	4.716.718	5.437.794
Total housing costs	2.208.612	4.244.941	5.436.289	9.175.625	11.704.014	14.280.558	15.803.504
Computers and equipment	514.462	1.227.336	1.887.295	2.165.257	2.114.207	3.208.631	5.094.976
Other overhead costs	1.577.064	3.020.128	5.741.707	11.866.782	19.741.533	24.299.463	21.838.289
Total overhead costs	6.227.582	12.687.463	19.093.426	33.025.057	45.539.928	56.076.052	58.229.393
FTE-law students	14	33	47	72	90	105	113
Overhead cost per FTE-law student	444.827	384.469	406.243	460.164	505.999	531.938	517.095

Table 7. Overhead cost per FTE law student 2003-2009 (in ISK)

Table 6 presents itemised direct expenses per FTE law student and Table 7 presents itemised overhead expenses per FTE law student. Table 8 draws on these two tables and shows the total cost per FTE law student and how it is divided between direct and overhead expenses. Figure 4 presents that same information visually and Figure 5 shows the proportion of local and overhead costs.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Direct expenses	343.456	365.169	468.543	497.192	410.276	507.108	529.950
Overhead expenses	444.827	384.469	406.243	460.164	505.999	531.938	517.095
Total	788.283	749.638	874.786	957.356	916.275	1.039.046	1.047.045

Table 8. Total cost per FTE law student 2003-2009 (in ISK)

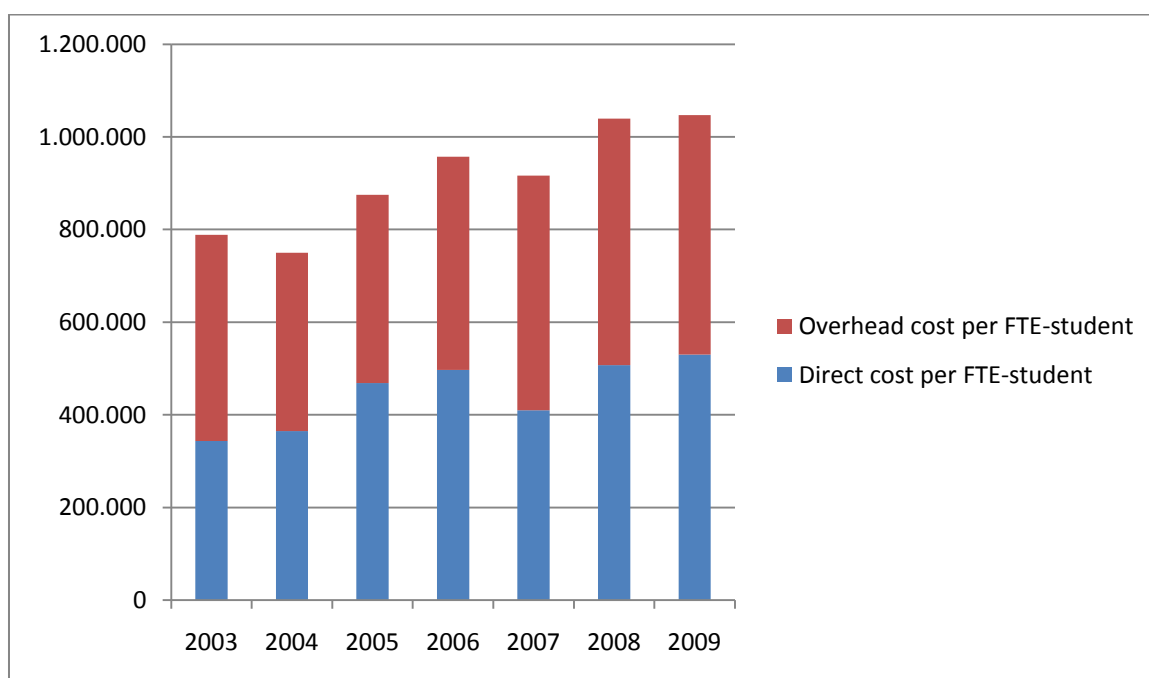


Figure 4. Total cost per FTE law student 2003-2009 (in ISK)

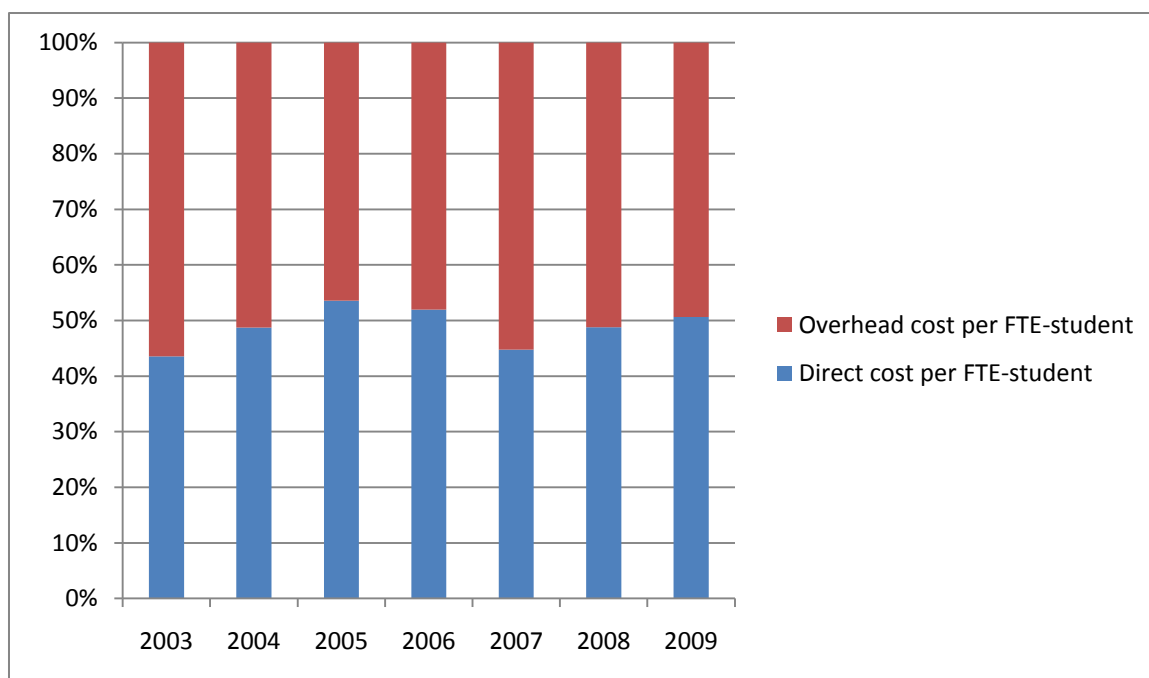


Figure 5. Proportion of direct and overhead cost per FTE law student 2003-2009 (%)

Figure 4 shows how the average cost per FTE-law student has grown from just under 800,000 ISK in 2003 to just over 1,000,000 ISK in 2009. It must be kept in mind that these numbers do not take inflation into account. Moreover, they represent total costs. That is, they reflect not only the cost associated directly with the law programmes, such as staff wages for the Law Faculty, but also overhead costs, such as housing, support services and university administration. As shown in Table 7, the overhead housing costs include depreciation and finance cost even though not all such costs go through UNAK's accounts. Some of the costs presented above therefore do not even appear in UNAK's annual budget. As shown in Figure 5, combined overhead costs amount to about half of the total cost per FTE-law student.

7.7 How is the cost calculated?

Direct costs for the Faculty of Law are calculated in combination with the Faculty of Social Sciences; separate books are not kept for each of these two faculties. Instead, the approximate direct cost for the Faculty of Law is arrived at by multiplying the combined direct expenses for these two faculties with the course credits offered by the Faculty of Law, divided by the course credits offered by the two faculties combined. The Law Faculty's share in the overall *direct* costs of these two faculties is thus considered equal to its share in course credits offered.

Overhead costs for the Faculty of Law are arrived at by multiplying UNAK's total overhead cost with the ratio between FTE-students in law and FTE-students at UNAK.

The *number of FTE-students* at UNAK and its faculties is assumed in the annual state contribution, based on UNAK's prediction of the development of student numbers together with the state budget assumption of predicted overall number of university students in the country. This results in a concrete number of FTE-students for the faculties of law and social sciences combined.

The *number of FTE-students in the Faculty of Law* is arrived at by multiplying the total FTE-students in the faculties of law and social sciences combined with the Faculty of Law's proportion of course credits.

The *total cost per FTE-law student* is arrived at by dividing the sum of direct and overhead expenses of the Faculty of Law by the number of FTE-law students (see Table 5).

8 International comparison

8.1 Is the study programme modeled on, or comparable to, a study programme at a foreign university?

University legal education began in the medieval period as a primarily intellectual pursuit, with the Roman law and Canon law education of clerics. This system did develop into one that trained practising jurists but in time there was a reaction against academic law on the part of legal professionals and this was reflected in the emergence of legal apprenticeship as the standard form of legal education during the early modern period. Modern university legal education came into existence under the control of the legal profession, who only with reluctance ceded ground on the role of apprenticeship in the formation of lawyers. This is the reason why the core substantive law subjects as taught traditionally in modern universities – such as contract, tort and property – focus largely on legal rules and principles, with little emphasis on their history, context or theoretical foundations. Although broader issues relating to law – in particular issues relating to its historical, theoretical, ethical, international and comparative aspects – are addressed by doctrine-dominated law schools, very often this is something that is “tagged on” to what is regarded as the essential business of the law school: training professionals. Some claim that many modern university law schools often resemble vocational “trade schools”, serving the needs of the legal profession rather than addressing student needs and scientific standards.

The tension between the intellectual or theoretical aspect of law, on the one hand, and the practical and professional aspect on the other hand, has underlain all discussions of and developments in legal education in recent times. The UNAK law study programme originated as an alternative approach to legal education based in part on a range of reports on legal education that concluded that the balance had shifted too much in the direction of the the practical and professional elements. These reports and surveys suggested that there was an over-emphasis on doctrine even when legal education was examined exclusively in terms of professional education. For example, in the United Kingdom the Ormrod Report (1971) reviewed the desirable mix of university and apprenticeship elements in legal education and considered that the skills needed of modern lawyers required a substantial university component in legal education. The professional lawyer, the report stated, “required a sufficiently general and broad based education to enable him to adapt himself to new and different situations as his career develops ... [H]e must also generate a critical approach to existing law, and appreciation of its social consequences, and an interest in, and a positive attitude to, appropriate developments and change.” (*Report of the Committee on Legal Education* (Cmnd 4595, HMSO, London, 1971), para. 100.) In similar vein, the Pearce Report in Australia (1987) argued that in educating law students it is desirable to cultivate a student's intellect in a spirit of free inquiry and to encourage independent thought and enquiry about the law:

[A] good undergraduate [law] course should provide an intellectual base for life long critical reflectiveness about legal institutions, the professions and one's own work, in the actual and changing conditions of social life and legal practice ... Law courses should expose students to an understanding of the processes and functions in society of law and legal institutions, to the variety of modes of social control, to the moral and political outlooks embedded in law and conceptions of professional roles, to questions of justice, to the relevance of social, political and moral theories and forces to law, legal institutions and their change and development, and to the information and understanding to be drawn from the social sciences and social science research for the purpose of evaluating law. (D. Pearce et al., *Australian Law Schools: A Discipline Assessment for the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission* (Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987), Vol. 1, p 105.)

Viewed in broader context, the idea that a university education should go beyond mechanical competencies and provide an opportunity for people to learn to think and explore ideas for themselves is at the heart of the UNAK law school philosophy, and reflects a growing body of academic as well as professional reflection:

The law school ...which sees its role as the training of lawyers ... has lost its way. Lawyering skills are taught better by the legal profession and on the job. The law school is a place to study, to examine, to criticise and to suggest reform to the body of norms that constitute a given legal system. The legal educator does not have a responsibility to train lawyers except in the crucial sense that she must send them off to the profession with a deep understanding, not only of how the law works, but of how it may work better. (M. Spence, "The Role of the Law Professor in Legal Education", Speech given at the China University of Political Science and Law, May, 2002.)

Many law schools throughout the world have shifted the balance of legal education away from the practical and professional aspects and toward the theoretical and intellectual aspects. For example at the University of Oxford, the undergraduate law degree is envisaged in a manner similar to that at UNAK:

The Oxford syllabus comprises topics chosen primarily for their intellectual interest, rather than for the frequency with which they arise in practice. But at the same time, the skills of researching, thinking and presentation developed by the Oxford courses are eminently suited to practical application, and employers recognise this. Moreover, the skills can be as well applied outside the law as within it. (University of Oxford⁵)

Indeed there is probably no law school that clings to a rigidly doctrinal approach in all the courses it offers. But whereas the dominant trend is towards making context-oriented subjects available as options or "electives", at UNAK these subjects form the foundation on which the B.A. is built.

The UNAK law school emphasis on general and broad based education at the undergraduate level, including courses taught by international guest professors, has several advantages for the students. In addition to the benefits already mentioned, law students at UNAK report satisfaction with the

⁵http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/courses/law_jurisprudence/law_4.html

preparation they receive for graduate studies at the international level (focus group interview, 2009). Taking that step is not so frightening for a student who is used to taking courses in English, and writing papers and taking examinations in English. Many students choose to write their B.A. thesis in English in order to prepare themselves for international careers or studies. Students are also pleased with the fact that they are permitted, and indeed expected, to suggest their own topics for their final theses, as opposed to being expected simply to sign up for a topic from limited menu, as is the case in some other law schools.

The UNAK legal education is unique and innovative in the extent to which the undergraduate focus is on theoretical, intellectual and comparative skills with a relatively minor focus on practical legal skills at this level. Nevertheless, the concentration of practical application of legal knowledge in a post-graduate degree is to some extent comparable to legal education in common law countries outside North America (where law is a graduate course of study). The traditional common law education system – and the UNAK system – involves students *concluding* their legal studies with a focus on the skills necessary to successfully complete bar exams and begin their professional careers. At traditional Scottish law schools, for example, it is usual to take a four-year undergraduate honours degree in law, followed by a one-year post graduate qualification (the Diploma in Legal Practice) for those who wish to pursue a career as a lawyer or advocate. Although substantive or "black-letter" Scots law subjects are taught in the first two years, the honours level courses in third and fourth year are intended to develop students' theoretical and critical skills. For this reason, the Scottish law degree attracts a number of students who will not take the postgraduate diploma and go on to qualify as solicitors or advocates. It is during the Diploma in Legal Practice, a necessary qualification for anyone who wishes to practise as a lawyer, that the practical application of law is taught, with a focus on legal process, conveyancing and skills necessary for private client work. The aim is to "develop practical skills thus ensuring the transition from university to traineeship/devilling is effected as seamlessly as possible" and "to bridge the gap between the academic programme and applied professional learning." (University of Glasgow⁶).

In England and Wales, the two principal routes to qualifying as a solicitor or barrister both distinguish between the intellectual/academic phase of education and the practical legal skills which are developed later. The main path is for a student to take a three year degree in law, again with a strong theoretical bent in addition to foundational black-letter law subjects, followed by the legal practice course (for solicitors) which is similar to the Scottish diploma or the Bar vocational course (for barristers). Potential lawyers also have the option of taking any undergraduate degree, followed by a one year programme of legal study, culminating in the Graduate Diploma in Law, before continuing with the legal practice course or Bar vocational course.

8.2 Does the study programme offer an internationally competitive study environment?

The UNAK law study programmes offer an internationally competitive study environment with a very low student-teacher ratio; extremely accessible teaching staff; good library and excellent inter-library loan facilities; state-of-the-art technological equipment to assist teaching throughout the campus; and top quality support services for students.

8.2.1 Teaching staff

Teaching staff with faculty status are hired either permanently (table 9) or temporarily (table 10).

⁶ <http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/schooloflaw/diploma/>

Permanent positions are advertised, whereas temporary positions are used to fulfill temporary needs, e.g. because of developing programmes, sabbaticals, and parental leaves. The overview in tables 9-11 shows that in the 2009-2010 academic year, the Law Faculty amounted to 5,35 FTE positions.

Adjuncts	%	Lecturers	%	Senior lecturers	%	Professors	%	Total FTE
Ágúst Þór Árnason	50			Pétur Leifsson	50	Timothy Murphy	100	
Árni Pálsson	30			Rachael Johnstone	100			
Þorsteinn Hjaltason	50							
Inga Þöll Þórgnýsdóttir	30							
FTE	1,6	0			1,5		1,0	4,1

Table 9. Permanent employment contracts in the Faculty of Law (2009-2010)

Adjuncts	%	Lecturers	%	Senior lecturers	%	Professors	%	Total FTE
Hrannar Hafberg	50	Natalia Loukacheva	75					1,25

Table 10. Temporary (12-month) employment contracts in the Faculty of Law (2009-2010)

Adjuncts	Lecturers	Senior lecturers	Professors	Total FTE
2,1	0,75	1,5	1,0	5,35

Table 11. FTE-staff in the Faculty of Law (2009-2010)

These tables show that our staffing level is low, including only two 100% positions and seven part time positions, including two temporary ones. Whereas Icelandic legal education has traditionally been provided by staff educated to Masters level only, at UNAK both full-time academic staff have doctorates, and so does one part time lecturer. Further information on individual staff members, including their bibliographies, is available through the unak website: <http://english.unak.is/?d=3&m=page&f=viewPage&id=89>.

Temporary instructors and visiting teachers are therefore an important part of the teaching staff at UNAK's law programmes. They are hired to teach one course (or part of a course) at a time, and such teaching amounts in a typical year to about 3-5 courses in the B.A. programme, 2-4 courses in the M.L. programme and 5-6 courses in the Polar Law programme. In 2009-2010, temporary or visiting teachers were responsible for approximately 26,3% of the teaching in the law programmes; the rest was carried out by members of the UNAK Law Faculty (65,3%) and members of other UNAK faculties (8,4%). Appendix 12 provides a complete overview of teachers for every law course that has been taught at UNAK since the law programme began in 2003. Since temporary instructors and visiting teachers are not regular staff, their CVs are not available through the UNAK website. It would seem excessive to include them all in appendices to this report, but they can be made available upon request.

Despite the relatively low staffing level, efforts have been made to ensure that the education available to students is not unduly compromised. We still retain a favourable student-teacher ratio and our relatively high number of visiting teachers are as accessible to students as our regular staff members; most of them visit regularly and are therefore familiar with the UNAK environment. They are also in most cases very experienced university teachers in addition to being scholarly experts in

the subjects they teach. They are each directed to the Staff Handbook which is in English to ensure accessibility to visiting scholars from outside of Iceland. The Handbook condenses essential information regarding course requirements, evaluation standards and minimum administrative responsibilities for course coordinators; provides summary guidance on payment procedures for teaching; introduces visitors to services available within UNAK and the local community; and consolidates links to University rules and regulations (including exam regulations and ethical standards) (Appendix 13). Nevertheless it would be preferable to strengthen our permanent faculty numbers, especially in light of the need to manage the extensive administrative load that comes with running three programmes.

A full time lecturer position was advertised in January 2008 but no hiring resulted. UNAK's Management Board has approved the Law Faculty's request to advertise the position again in the Spring term of 2010, with a view to hiring a permanent faculty member with expertise in Icelandic law.

8.2.2 Commitment to quality

All of the UNAK law courses have clear intended outcomes; all of our staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learning support that will help students achieve those outcomes; and we as a law school constantly aspire to improve and enhance the education we offer our students. In accordance with the Berlin mandate (referred to in the Bergen report), while we value the central importance of our institutional autonomy, this is tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities. To ensure the confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher legal education, as well as to maintain our standard of international competitiveness and attain our goals, we recognize the value of formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of our programmes and awards. We are committed very strongly, as UNAK more generally is, to the development of a culture that recognizes the importance of quality and quality assurance. Our strategy at UNAK law school for the continuous enhancement of quality includes a significant role for students, as for example shown by our recent graduate survey (see Appendix 16 and section 10.1).

The information collected in surveys is used to improve and safeguard the quality of our courses and programmes. At the end of each semester, the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Science receives an electronic copy of all course evaluations (see Appendix 14 and also section 9.1.1). The Dean pays special attention to teachers and courses that receive low scores or negative evaluations from students. This may result in an ad hoc interview where the teacher and Dean go over the evaluation and commit to specific means of improvement. All adjuncts, lecturers, senior lecturers and professors are also called for a career development interview bi-annually, and have the right to such an interview annually if they prefer. Going over course evaluations is part of the protocol for these interviews, both with a view to improvement and also in order to praise and recognize achievement.

The survey currently under way among graduates (Appendix 16) will similarly be used to improve the quality of the B.A. programme and M.L. programme. In particular, the law school will use this information to determine how to make sure the combination of the two programmes fulfills the twofold expectation of providing a solid preparation for international graduate studies and also of preparing graduates from the M.L. programme for careers in the Icelandic legal system.

8.2.3 Services for students and teachers

The University Office attends to all services to students and teachers. It operates in 5 divisions, each with its own director. These are Academic Administration, Marketing and Public Relations, Financial, Staff and Administration Section, Research and Development Centre and Library and Information Services. The Managing Director of the University Office meets with the five directors normally once a month and that meeting is a forum for dissemination of information, planning and discussions about finances. Information on the University Office can be found on the webpage <http://english.unak.is/?d=3&m=page&f=viewPage&id=77>.

8.2.3.1 Academic Administration

The Academic Administration is responsible for the planning and co-ordination of teaching at UNAK and the dissemination of information to students and teachers concerning teaching. This includes administration of teaching, faculty office management, registration of students, study counselling (<http://english.unak.is/?d=13&m=forsida>), examination management, distance education, management and counselling pertaining to student and teacher exchanges (<http://english.unak.is/?d=12&m=forsida>), the development of UNAK's information system and operating the UNAK switchboard. Besides the director the Academic Administration division has 11 FTE employees.

8.2.3.2 Marketing and Public Relations

The division of Marketing and Public Relations is responsible for UNAK's PR activities to prospective students and others who want to familiarise themselves with its operations. The division publishes all brochures and pamphlets aimed at prospective students, manages UNAK's web, organises events, receives visitors and guests and handles interaction with the media. The division has a director and, at extremely busy times, another employee to help.

8.2.3.3 RHA - Research and Development Centre

The University of Akureyri Research and Development Centre (RHA) is an independent centre within the university that provides research support for academics in the law department. The centre receives some funding directly from the university but most of its income comes from research projects and consultations for companies, organisations, ministries, and from domestic and foreign research grants. The centre's main aim is to enhance the University of Akureyri's research capabilities and to strengthen its ties to the local and national economy. It also has the role of developing new projects within the university and it provides a broad range of research services, including assistance with empirical research surveys and in relation to applications for research funding from various sources. For further information see <http://www.rha.is/?mod=forsida&sport=frontpage&lang=eng>.

8.2.3.4 Library

The University of Akureyri Library is situated at Sólborg. It is open workdays from 8:00 – 18.00 and Saturdays from 12.00 – 15.00 during winter. In summer on the other hand the library is open all workdays from 8.00 – 16.00 but closed Saturdays. The number of library volumes at the end of 2009 was approximately 61.000 copies. More detailed information on the library and its services is available at the library's website at: <http://english.unak.is/?d=10&m=forsida>

The library's inter library loans services have always been a priority and emphasis is laid on rapid document delivery both from domestic and international libraries as its stock of printed material does not amount to many copies yet compared to international libraries. It is the library's policy to

buy all published Icelandic material on law and most of the older published legal material as available on the market.

The libraries stock of electronic materials is on the other hand quite impressive already. Icelandic Supreme Court judgments (*Hæstaréttardómar*) from 1 January 1945 are accessible online to students and teachers who receive special access identifications from the library. Another important electronic resource is *LexisNexis Academic*, which provides access to over 6,000 full-text news, business, and legal sources using a variety of flexible search options. In addition the library subscribes to approximately 1560 e-journals accessible through various databases and gateways such as JSTOR, Synergy, Elsevier ScienceDirect and others.

Information on the UNAK library's electronic resources is accessible on the webpage <http://english.unak.is/?d=10&m=page&f=viewPage&id=42>.

The library is committed to teaching and training students in information literacy in light of the learning outcome that students be able to use information sources in digital and printed form both during their university studies and after graduation. They will also have the necessary skills to evaluate the quality of information retrieved and have the ability to use it in a systematic manner. Training in use of the aforementioned databases and evaluation of sources identified therein is incorporated into a first year course (VGH0173 Writing Skills and Critical Thinking).

Reading rooms with 64 seats are located in the library and 24 of them are equipped with computers. At the rear of the computer space there is a reading room exclusively designed for reading where laptops are not allowed. Students also have access to three work rooms equipped with computers. One of these rooms accommodates 6 – 8 persons whereas the others have room for 4 – 6 persons. There is a computer in every room. The reading room at Þingvallastræti accommodates 17 students and the computer room there accommodates 20 students. There are also a few classrooms at Sólborg and in Þingvallastræti that are open after teaching hours and during exams.

Besides the director Library and Information Services have 4 FTE employees.

8.2.3.5 Computer Systems and Computer Equipment

The University of Akureyri computer system operates in Windows and Linux environments. The systems managers of UNAK responsible for the operations of the computer system also attend to safety measures, both operational and data safety, in addition to supervision of access and accounts controls. The computer system is accessible almost everywhere in UNAK housing facilities, both by means of fixed and wireless connections.

All members of the UNAK staff and students have UNAK e-mail addresses and accounts in the system accessible with user names and keywords and e-mail addresses. All UNAK computers – including those of employees and in the computer rooms – are equipped with programmes. The anti-virus programme is upgraded daily and occasionally several times a day.

Net Servers	24
Desk computers including computer service booths	350
Printers/Photocopiers	38
Scanners	5
Wireless Nets – Number of Transmitters	45
Approximate Number of Laptops	200

Table 12. University of Akureyri Computer Systems

8.2.3.6 Computer and Media Centre

At Sólborg there is a Computer and Media Centre that occupies an area of 55 square meters. Its employees provide customer service for the computer system consisting of assistance and counselling to students and employees concerning the use of UNAK's hardware (in offices and classrooms) and software, that is, both general software such as the Office programmes and various specialised versions of software.

The Computer and Media Centre offers work facilities for students and teachers, such as computer booths, access to specialised equipment and software. The software – which is primarily for audio, photo and film processing – is not generally available at other UNAK computers. Facilities for printouts, including colour printouts and spiral binding, are available at the Computer and Media Centre for students and teachers free of charge. They are required nevertheless to defray the cost of the material.

At the Computer and Media Centre students and teachers can borrow various kinds of equipment, including lap tops, overhead projectors, cameras, video recording equipment, sound recording equipment, slide projectors in addition to various other kinds of teaching tools.

Computer and Media Centre employees ensure that advice, queries and requests queries from computer users are duly processed. Enquiries are sent to the e-mail address: gagn@unak.is. Between 40 and 60 enquiries are received monthly and attempts are made to answer each of these within 24 hours. Time spent on solving tasks depends on their character and scope.

8.2.4 Housing facilities and related services

UNAK housing facilities are either new or recently refurbished. An exception is the facility currently housing the Department of Education and Centre for School Development in Þingvallastræti which will move to the main campus next Autumn.

At Sólborg there are classrooms, computer rooms, conference rooms, offices of teachers, the UNAK Library, the Computer and Media Centre, the cafeteria, the office of the Student Union (FSHA) and a service desk.

Norðurborg, next door to Sólborg, houses the offices of teachers in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Law, as well as the office of the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. These offices will be moved to Sólborg in Autumn 2010 in conjunction with the move of the Faculty of Education and the Centre for School Development from its current location in Þingvallastræti to the Sólborg building complex. These changes are made possible by the opening of new facilities in Autumn 2010, currently under construction at Sólborg (see below). After these changes, the entire School of Humanities and Social Sciences will be located in the same building, facilitating even greater interaction and cooperation between the Faculties.

Borgir is a research and innovation centre that opened in the Autumn of 2004. The centre houses classrooms, offices of teachers in the School of Business and Science and laboratory facilities. A number of research institutions and other public institutions, some of them closely cooperating with UNAK, are also housed at Borgir.

The total size of the housing, in square metres, at the disposal of UNAK is at present:

Location	Square Metres
Sólborg and Norðurborg	6.427
Pingvallastræti	2.225
Borgir	2.847
<i>Square Metres Total</i>	<i>11.499</i>

Table 13. UNAK's total housing facilities

In Autumn 2010 a new wing of 2.300 square meters currently under construction will be opened at Sólborg with a conference and lecture hall with seating for up to 500 persons, two lecture theatres with inclined seating for 70 students each, three ordinary classrooms for 35-40 students each, three small classrooms for 20-25 students and a study room accommodating approximately 40 students. All facilities will be furnished with state of the art equipment and technology.

The students receive smart cards at the beginning of their studies at UNAK, which provide them with access around the clock to UNAK facilities such as reading rooms, computer rooms, printers, photocopying machines and the wireless network.

8.2.4.1 Classrooms

Classroom housing measures almost 2500 m². Classrooms are generally well equipped with computers and overhead projectors, but many are also equipped for distance education with teleconferencing equipment such as cameras, wireless microphones, loudspeakers and electronic blackboards.

8.2.4.2 Offices

All permanently employed members of the teaching staff have an office with a desk, a computer and telephone. Most have a private office, but in some instances two teachers share an office with a partition. Teachers can request other equipment such as a lap top, and action is taken as quickly as possible on such requests insofar as financial authorisations permit.

8.2.4.3 Computer Rooms

Computer rooms for students are located at Sólborg and Pingvallastræti. Computer rooms are accessible to students during off-hours from teaching. Supervision of computer rooms is in the hands of the employees of the Computer and Media Centre. The students need to use the computer rooms has decreased over the years as almost all students use their own lab tops and the wireless LAN connections to UNAK's computer (which are available from anywhere in UNAK's buildings).

8.2.4.4 Conference Facilities

There are more than ten conference rooms in UNAK that students and teachers can reserve by contacting the Academic Administration or the Custodian of Housing at Borgir.

8.2.4.5 Fitness and Exercise Room

There is a fitness and exercise room at Sólborg open to employees and students on Mondays through Fridays from 7:35 – 21.30 except when in use for teaching.

8.2.4.6 Dining Room/Cafeteria

At Sólborg there is a 214 square meters cafeteria for both students and teachers. On workdays students and teachers can purchase hot meals at noon, and sandwiches, sweets, various soft drinks etc. The cafeteria is open all workdays from 8:00 - 15:30 but after that there is access to various food products in vending machines. At Sólborg there are also several coffee nooks, with seating for teachers, if they prefer not to share dining facilities with students. Students have access to a refrigerator, sandwich grill and a microwave oven when the cafeteria is closed.

At Borgir there are automated vending machines where coffee, sandwiches and sweets are sold. On the 2nd floor there is ample space that can accommodate approximately 100 persons for meals. On the 3rd floor there is open space with smaller coffee rooms in each office unit. Teachers have access there to a refrigerator, sink and tea and coffee making equipment.

At Þingvallastræti there is a coffee room for students with automatic vending machines, seating space and box lunch facilities. There is a special coffee room for teaching staff with access to a refrigerator and coffee and tea making equipment.

8.2.4.7 Storage Lockers

At Sólborg there are 200 storage lockers for rent to students. Half of the lockers contain sockets for chargers so that lap tops, mobile phones, etc. can be stored and charged there.

8.2.4.8 Automated Teller Machine

An automated teller machine for students and teachers is located at Sólborg.

8.2.4.9 Photocopying Machines

Smart cards are used as photocopying cards. Photocopying machines for students are located at the following places: At Sólborg there are two machines, in the library and on the 2nd floor of T-corridor, at Borgir there are two machines, in the east wings on the 2nd and 3rd floors and on the 2nd floor at Þingvallastræti. Teachers have an unlimited photocopying quota. Photocopying machines are located near all office section wings.

8.2.4.10 Printers

Students can buy printer quotas in the Computer and Media Centre. Printers are located in all computer rooms but students can also print from their lap tops via the wireless LAN on the printer nearest them on each occasion.

Teachers have an unlimited printing quota and they have access to printers in all office wings.

8.2.4.11 Buses

As a part of the town of Akureyri's environmental policy bus services are free of charge. Schedules have recently been modified in response to student and faculty requests.

9 Criteria and standards for students and university

9.1 Have internal criteria been established? (This question pertains especially to teaching practices).

9.1.1 Ensuring teaching quality

It is taken for granted at UNAK that information obtained by means of student evaluation surveys is important in quality assurance and should be used to improve teaching quality. Hence every course is reviewed in a student-led evaluation at the end of the semester in which it is taught. The evaluation is open during the last two to three weeks of each semester, and it closes the day examinations begin. The evaluation is conducted online and students complete this anonymously. Students are invited to comment on the quality of the course, the teaching materials and the teaching itself. On one hand the student assesses the course as a whole and on the other the teaching performance of teachers who gave six lectures or more in the relevant course. (Appendix 14 – Course Evaluation Questionnaire)

When the evaluation has been completed and on expiry of the period that the teacher has for submission of the students' grades for the semester courses, the Deans of schools access and analyse the electronic student evaluation data. For comparison they can also view the students' grades in the relevant courses (final grade point distribution). The Deans have two weeks to study the results and thereafter the results are sent to all teachers. Supervisory instructors receive all data concerning their courses, their own teaching and that of other teachers in their courses. Teachers without supervisory responsibility receive the general course results and results concerning themselves. If evaluations indicate serious causes for concern, the Dean raises these concerns immediately with the teacher, and they commit to means for improvement. Students have access to the overall grade each course received in the student evaluation as well as to comparisons of individual features among faculties.

Deans of schools are responsible for discussing the results of the course evaluation with teachers during career development interviews with teaching staff. The Deans are also responsible upon conclusion of the interviews for providing the Director of Quality Management with written reports on the decisions made or proposed improvements that have been decided upon and how they are to be followed up on and monitored.

In keeping with UNAK's policy of ongoing quality review, the course evaluation is discussed regularly at UNAK's Quality Council. A decrease in the students' participation (see Table 14 below) and their view that little is done with the results has caused concern there. Therefore the council formed a work group (the Quality Council's staff and student representatives, the member of staff responsible for the evaluations and the Director of Quality Management) with the aim of identifying possible causes and to suggest improvements to the course evaluation and its follow-up that would result in better participation by students.

	Autumn 05	Spring 06	Autumn 06	Spring 07	Autumn 07	Spring 08	Autumn 08	Spring 09
Faculty of Social Sciences	61%	56%	59%	50%	60%	47%	46%	
Faculty of Education	59%	51%	62%	57%	59%	44%	56%	
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences								37%
School of Health Sciences	58%	47%	59%	48%	59%	37%	46%	33%
School of Business and Science	59%	51%	64%	54%	61%	54%	47%	35%
Total	59%	51%	61%	52%	60%	46%	49%	35%

Table 14. Student participation in course evaluations

Based upon suggestions from the work group the Quality Council has decided that the university will in future support more than one method of course evaluation. The council believes that it is important that teachers are offered methods of course evaluation that give them the opportunity to improve courses while they are being taught. Further, the council anticipates that if course evaluation leads to immediate improvements students become more willing to participate. During the coming Spring semester of 2010 teachers will be assisted, if they choose, to give their students an opportunity to take part in a short course evaluation at mid-semester using questions constructed by the teachers themselves. The results of the evaluations will be sent to the teacher only to begin with but will follow the regular course evaluation information sent to the Dean at the end of the semester. Another change will be that teachers will have the opportunity to comment on and change/add questions used in the main course evaluation at the end of the semester/term. This is in response to the views of some teachers that the evaluation does not fit their course.

As means for a follow-up on the course evaluation results the Quality Council recommends [as suggested by the work group] that the teachers should fill out a special form, at the end of teaching their course, with information on their view of the course, what went well and what needs to be improved. They would then send it to the Dean who discusses it with the teacher at the next staff development interview along with the result of all course evaluation results. Other minor changes will be implemented this coming semester and in a years time the Quality Council will review the result.

Information is also collected on graduates' opinions of the various aspects of the programme from which they are graduating. This survey was conducted among all UNAK candidates for graduation in Spring 2008 and Spring 2009. The results are instructive and indicate areas where students experience strengths and weaknesses in their programme. Graduates from both the B.A. programme and the M.L. programme tend to rate highly the knowledge and skills they have received through their studies. They also offer constructive criticism regarding the shortage of staff and consequent need to put more effort into administration and leadership than current resources allow. This valuable feedback strengthens the case for hiring a third full-time teacher (see section 8.2.1).

9.1.2 University Regulations and Policies on Equality, Ethical Standards and Language

UNAK has in place various rules and regulations for ensuring equity and professional conduct. These include a Code of Conduct for Staff and Students (approved by the University Council in August 2008), [Rules on Penalties for Plagiarism no. 727/2006](#), a [Policy on Equal Access to Study and Work](#) (approved by the University Council on 1 September 2006), an [Environmental Policy](#) (approved by the University Council on 24 June 2005) and a Gender Equality Plan 2009-2011 (approved by the

University Council on 24 June 2009). The University of Akureyri also has a [Language Policy](#) (approved by the University Council on 22 February 2008).

An overview with links to University Rules and Regulations is available at the UNAK website: <http://www.unak.is/haskolinn/page/logogreglur>. Similarly, University strategies and policies are available at <http://www.unak.is/haskolinn/page/stefnumal>. Not all exist in English translation but those that do can be found at <http://english.unak.is/?d=3&m=page&f=viewPage&id=74> and <http://english.unak.is/?d=3&m=page&f=viewPage&id=86>.

9.2 Has the university established criteria for study standards and study assessment?

The university is committed to working with internationally recognisable standards in education and to this end is following the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, and more specifically the National Qualification Framework for Iceland⁷ (Bologna Process). The Faculty of Law is making excellent progress in terms of implementation within its programmes of study. Overall learning outcomes for the B.A. and M.L. study lines were completed in 2007 and the Polar Law outcomes were completed prior to those study lines opening in 2008. The learning outcomes for all study lines were reviewed and revised in 2009 and will be subject to constant review and revision to ensure their ongoing appropriateness. They are compliant with the National Qualifications' criteria and hence facilitate international comparison of student skills within the European area.

Descriptions and learning outcomes for each course are also presented in light of the Bologna Process in UNAK's Course Catalogue, ensuring that exchange students and graduates can display clearly to European universities and/or employers the skills that they have learned. Diploma Supplements are among the papers issued by UNAK to its students upon graduation as required by the Bologna process.

"Reference grids" for all study lines in law have been compiled provisionally to measure the extent to which the courses offered match the overall learning outcomes. Using these as a guidance tool, teachers' meetings will be held to evaluate any need for changes to the programmes which will then be introduced as soon as possible,, respecting the need to minimise disruption to students already enrolled.

The next stage of the process is the development of assessment criteria, both general and pertaining to each particular course and this is scheduled to begin towards the end of the Spring semester, with gradual implementation expected from Autumn 2010.

Implementation of the Bologna process is lead by the Course Curriculum Committee and is in the hands of the teachers in the faculty, subject to guidance and supervision by experts from outside the department, including the Quality Council and personnel from other departments with considerable experience in this field.

Further information is contained in Appendix 15: Programme of Action (Bologna Process), Faculty of Law 2009-2010.

⁷ [http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf_Annad/B_nr_80_2007\[1\].pdf](http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-pdf_Annad/B_nr_80_2007[1].pdf)

9.3 How are these factors assessed?

Course evaluations are reviewed by each teacher and the Dean, and they are reviewed during career-development interviews (see section 8.2.2). The results of the graduate survey is sent to the Dean who uses it as input for the internal evaluation of the programme.

UNAK's Quality Council is responsible for planning and assessing the implementation of standards and criteria regarding teaching and study assessment. The Council reviews the results of course evaluations every semester, and is responsible for the development of these evaluations. It also oversees the implementation of the Bologna process in the various faculties and schools of the university. To mention one example of how this responsibility is carried out, in Autumn 2009 a work group headed by the Director of Quality Management conducted a small investigation into the state of course descriptions and learning outcomes in the various programmes offered at UNAK, with a view to ensuring uniformity of approach and preparing the ground for the next step of implementation, i.e. the introduction of assessment criteria into formal course descriptions.

9.4 Have any changes been made recently in the study programme as a result of internal or external assessment?

The law programmes are all subject to ongoing review to ensure they continue to meet the ever-changing needs and expectations of the students. The course curriculum is reviewed annually under the supervision of the Course Curriculum Committee, at which time the committee reviews the overall study lines and the principal teachers review each individual course, amending the description and learning outcomes if necessary. Both the committee and the teachers take on board prior experiences, results and stakeholder feedback. Minor improvements are implemented immediately. Major changes are also introduced as soon as practically possible, usually the next Autumn.

Two recent examples which resulted following consultation with the students and teachers are:

- 2007 - Introduction of full-term teaching in place of intensive course teaching in the M.L. programme, in response to feedback from teachers and students who considered that the nature of the material being taught demanded a different style of learning.
- 2009-2010 - Reorganisation of the order of the courses taught in the B.A. degree to introduce both international law and Icelandic legal history in the first year. Again, this was in response to feedback from teachers and students who felt that these subjects were necessary foundations before progressing to upper-year study.

Review in conjunction with the Bologna process as detailed previously may also lead to further changes.

10 Graduates

10.1 Is information collected about how graduates fare on the job market or in further education?

The Faculty has recently collected information about how graduates fare on the job market or in further education. In Autumn 2009, a questionnaire was designed and sent out to all graduates from

the B.A. and M.L. programmes (see Appendix 16). Information from this survey is still being processed at the time of writing this report, but will be available at the site visit.

As shown in Table 15, UNAK's Faculty of Law has graduated a total of 76 students, including 56 with a B.A. degree, 16 with an M.L. degree and 4 with a diploma in Polar Law.

Degree \ Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
B.A.	11	14	19	12	56
M.L.			10	6	16
Dipl. PL				4	4
Total	11	14	29	22	76

Table 15. Graduates from UNAK's Faculty of Law

Table 16 shows that out of 56 graduates from the B.A. programme, 42 are either currently in (27) or have already graduated from (15) the UNAK graduate programmes in law, i.e. the M.L. programme and the Polar Law Programme. The remaining 14 graduates may have proceeded to other graduate studies, entered the job market, established families, etc.; it will be interesting to see from the survey how they have fared.

Current status	Number of B.A. graduates
Already graduated from UNAK with M.L.-degree	14
Currently in the UNAK M.L. programme	24
Already graduated from UNAK with diploma in Polar Law	1
Currently in the UNAK Polar Law programme	2
Currently in both the M.L. and Polar Law programme	1
Neither in nor graduated from the UNAK's graduate law programmes	14
Total	56

Table 16. B.A. graduates' progression into UNAK's graduate studies

The survey will also bring useful information about the 16 graduates of the M.L. programme. As mentioned previously, we already know that out of the 10 M.L.-graduates from 2008, nine currently work as lawyers; three in Reykjavík, two in Akureyri, and four in other areas throughout Iceland. The tenth graduate has been selected to lead an academic project on human rights issues, but the project is currently stalled for lack of funding. Out of the six M.L.-graduates from 2009, three work as lawyers at law firms, two in Akureyri and one in Reykjavík.

Our M.L. graduates have thus generally been successful in finding suitable employment. They have also proven themselves to be valuable employees. The following testimonials to that effect were received in January 2010:

Pacta Attorneys hired a lawyer with a Master degree from UNAK, who has now passed his bar exams (héraðsdómsslögmansréttindi). He has fully met our expectations. He has approached his tasks professionally and managed to capture the pertinent legal issues in every case. The legal education he received at UNAK has in my opinion made him broad minded, which makes him capable of handling tasks successfully. Teachers are lawyers from different directions: the mixture of lawyers and scholars who are known for their academic work, and practising lawyers who do a great deal of teaching, is of great benefit to the students. From my experience of this attorney I can only conclude that the organisation of legal education at UNAK creates good conditions for law students to acquire understanding and knowledge through their studies that is of great use in work at a law firm.

Ólafur Rúnar Ólafsson, hdl.**Regional Director, Pacta Attorneys in Northern Iceland.****Hafnarstræti 91-95, 600 Akureyri / Laugavegi 99, 101 Reykjavík**

V has now worked at our law office for two years and earned a good reputation. She is sharp, reasonable and hard working, and thus has a mixture of qualities that is often a recipe for success. Although I have forgotten the exact details, I remember wondering initially whether something might be lacking in preparation for work as attorney when considering a candidate from UNAK. Those worries have proven unnecessary but we must not forget of course that the bar-exam course – which most lawyers try to take as early as possible – is an addition to and review of their legal education. The course creates a certain common ground for lawyers with different backgrounds that did not exist before (i.e. before the course was established). I am therefore very satisfied with my employee from UNAK.

Þórður Bogason hrl./Thordur Bogason, Attorney at Law**LÖGMENN HÖFDAB.A.KKA / ATTORNEYS AT HOFDAB.A.KKI Höfðabakki 9, 6.hæð 110**

The Akureyri District Commissioner has for one and a half years employed a lawyer who graduated from the University of Akureyri. Our experience of this lawyer has been very good in every way. The knowledge she brought from the examination table seems good because she is very easily able to solve the tasks she has had to tackle. Her legal reasoning is good and her basic knowledge is clearly great; she is thus quick to look up necessary and relevant information and knows where and how to search for it. Although the lawyer's main tasks are in the field of forced public sale, she has also worked on various other tasks such as in the field of family law, police matters and registration of real estate and chattels. All tasks have been executed well and without hesitation. I dare say that the job performance of this lawyer testifies that the preparation she received in her university studies was good and has proven very useful in her job.

Björn Jósef Arnviðarson, Akureyri District Commissioner (Sýslumaðurinn á Akureyri).

A third piece of evidence is attached in Appendix 17, a January 2010 interview in the local newspaper *Vikudagur* with a 2009 graduate who upon graduation was selected for a competitive position at LEX law offices.

In recognition of the important international bent of the legal education at UNAK, four of our graduates have secured employment with the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs and another is the Head of the Permits Department at the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration.

Although the law programmes at UNAK are relatively new on the Icelandic legal education landscape, they have now reached the point where graduates are put to the test in the job market. Although early indications are certainly positive, UNAK is committed to collecting and reviewing all relevant information and to using it in the future development of the programmes to ensure that our graduates will be able to expect even greater success in the future.

11 Development of the studies and future vision

11.1 What is the university's vision for the future of the studies and the study programme?

UNAK hopes to continue to build on the solid foundations of legal education that it has already established. UNAK has struggled with inadequate funding for a number of years and this problem has been intensified by the current economic crisis. However, in anticipation of an improved economic environment, UNAK would expect to expand the Faculty of Law both in terms of students and staffing numbers. This would enable the introduction of more optional courses for students at all levels and thus more individually tailored degrees. The expansion of the Polar Law programme is also envisaged. In this international and inter-collegiate project, it will always be necessary to ensure the continued involvement of top international researchers but it would also enrich the programme to ground it with more locally based staff.

Improved financial circumstances would also enable UNAK to invest more heavily in research support for the academic legal staff and move more quickly to fulfilling its objective of becoming a centre of recognised international research excellence. This would have direct and positive ramifications for all programmes of study in law as, without negating the high quality of research conducted by the two full-time legal academics and the internationally acclaimed scholarship of many of the Polar Law instructors, a richer research pool will be reflected in course materials and teaching and create opportunities for students to discover new and evolving legal topics outside the confines of individual courses.

11.2 Does the university believe that changes need to be made in the studies?

UNAK is in general very content with the excellent teaching and research produced by the limited staff involved in legal studies. In particular, the novel framework of the studies is considered to be pedagogically congruent with the aim of providing Iceland with a pool of learned, dynamic graduates, equipped to fully participate in society. Although the studies themselves are considered to be sound, it will be necessary to increase the staffing level within the faculty, in particular and in the immediate future, with the appointment of a permanent, full-time expert in Icelandic law.

12 Summary and conclusions

UNAK offers unique law programmes that have incorporated high standards of innovation and excellence. The B.A. programme is constructed as a broad social science programme where law and jurisprudence are examined in historical, social and philosophical context. The M.L. programme on the other hand is highly practical, focusing on Icelandic rules of law and legal process. Together, the B.A. and M.L. programmes provide preparation for entry into the legal profession, and graduates from these programmes have evidently impressed their employers with their skills and knowledge. The more recent Polar Law programme establishes UNAK as a center of pioneering research and education within a fast growing, exciting and under-explored discipline.

The law programmes fit neatly with the role and strategies of UNAK, and they have been a significant part of UNAK's evolution from a vocational collage to a well-rounded academic university community.

Law Faculty members are extremely active researchers, earning considerably more research points on average per year than their colleagues in other faculties at UNAK and probably beyond. Many temporary instructors and visiting teachers are also active researchers and faculty research is generally well represented in course syllabi. The faculty is home to the Yearbook of Polar Law published by Brill Academic Publishers, as well as the law journal *Lögfræðingur*. The faculty hosts various conferences and public lectures, including the annual international Polar Law Symposium, where leading scholars discuss their cutting edge research.

Student numbers are showing an upward trend. The size of the entering class has fluctuated between 16 (Autumn 2007) and 35 (Autumn 2009). Although every effort is made to ensure that each course is well attended, the student-teacher ratio remains favorable. However, the significant proportion of temporary instructors and visiting teachers creates an administrative burden that must be addressed. A new lecturer position will be advertised in Spring 2010 with a view to hiring a specialist in Icelandic law.

In 2009, the average direct cost per FTE-student was 529.950 ISK in direct expenses and 517.095 ISK in overhead expenses calculated in the most inclusive way possible.

Although the UNAK law programme is unique among Icelandic law programmes in its approach to legal education, it follows the example of many law schools throughout the world who have shifted the balance of legal education away from the practical and professional aspects and toward the theoretical and intellectual aspects. Examples include such world-leading academic institutions as the University of Oxford and the University of Glasgow. The UNAK law programme therefore makes a very important contribution to the aim of ensuring that legal education in Iceland meets international standards. The study environment is also internationally competitive.

Quality assessment for the law programmes is overseen by UNAK's Quality Council and the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Individual courses are assessed by a student questionnaire, and so is each programme as a whole. Feedback from these sources is the basis of improvement efforts both within courses and at the level of programme structure and organisation.

A total of 76 candidates have graduated from the UNAK Faculty of Law in 2006-2009. A survey is being conducted to assess how these graduates have fared. Graduates from the M.L. programme have generally been successful in finding employment as lawyers and most of them work outside the Reykjavík area. Their employers have provided stellar reviews of their performance.

Overall, UNAK has successfully met its goal of establishing a novel framework for legal studies in Iceland that provides a pool of learned, dynamic graduates equipped with the skills valued by its stakeholders. With continued investment and increased staffing, this goal can be preserved and developed in the future.