REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

NEWSLETTER

A publication of CLE

April 2026

20TH EDITION

Features:

- The CLE Explainer
- Legal Education Providers Audits
- April 2026 Bar Examination Cycle
- ATP Examination Standards
- Crossing Hormuz

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

Editor's Note

Advancing Excellence Through Accountability and Innovation

20TH EDITION

Welcome to the April 2026 edition of the CLE Newsletter.

As the legal education landscape continues to evolve, CLE remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening quality assurance, enhancing institutional oversight, and promoting excellence in legal education and training in Kenya.

This edition documents key milestones and engagements undertaken by the Council in advancing its statutory mandate under the Legal Education Act, CAP 16B. From quality assurance audits and stakeholder engagements to reflections on the April 2026 Advocates Training Programme (ATP) Examination cycle, these stories highlight CLE's continued focus on integrity, professionalism, accountability, and continuous improvement.

In this issue, you will find insights into the systems and safeguards that uphold fairness and credibility in the ATP examination process, ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration across the legal education sector, and initiatives to ensure institutions offering legal education meet the required academic and regulatory standards.

We appreciate our stakeholders, partners, legal education providers, candidates, and the public for their continued support and engagement.

Enjoy the read.

Congratulations to the CEO

CLE CEO, Prof. Jack Mwimali holding the award pack at the African Prestige 100 Honoris Awards

The Council of Legal Education Secretary/Chief Executive Officer, Prof. Busalile Jack Mwimali, has been honoured with the Legal Education Leadership Excellence Award at the prestigious African Prestige 100 Honoris Awards held in Nairobi during the ELIAD / Aspire Global Leadership & Innovation Summit.

The African Prestige 100 Honoris Awards celebrate visionary leaders, founders, executives and institutions across Africa that have demonstrated transformative leadership, innovation and measurable impact within their respective sectors.

Prof. Mwimali received the award in recognition of his exceptional leadership in advancing legal education and professional training standards in Kenya.

CLE CEO and CLE Team receiving the award at Safari Park

AFRICAN PRESTIGE 100 HONORIS AWARDS PICTORIAL

Panel Discussion at the ELIAD / Aspire Global Leadership & Innovation Summit

CLE CEO Prof. Jack Mwimali on stage to receive an award

Attendees at the ELIAD/ASPIRE Global Leadership Summit

CLE Team receiving the award

Trophy and Certificates received at ELIAD/ASPIRE Global Leadership Summit

APRIL 2026 ATP BAR EXAMINATION SERIES SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED

Candidates sitting for the bar exams in April

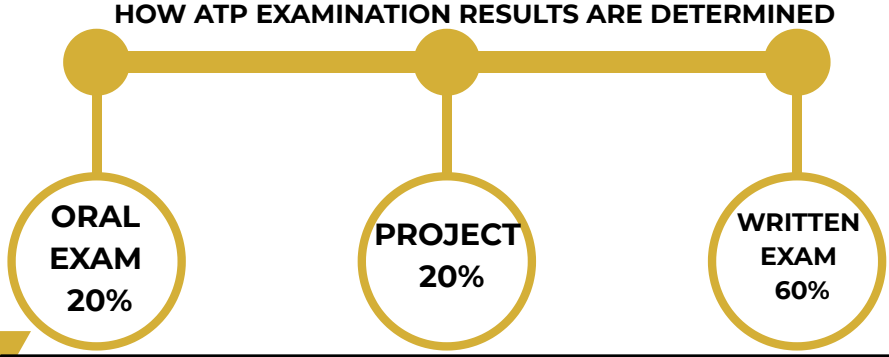
The Council of Legal Education successfully concluded the April 2026 Advocates Training Programme (ATP) Examination series conducted in the Nairobi Region from 9th April to 21st April 2026.

The examinations were administered in line with CLE's statutory mandate under the Legal Education Act, CAP 16B, to administer the ATP Examination and uphold quality standards in legal education and training in Kenya.

The examination process remains a key quality assurance mechanism in ensuring competence, professionalism and integrity within the legal profession.

CLE commends all candidates for their dedication and commitment throughout the examination period and appreciates all stakeholders who contributed to the successful administration of the examinations.

HOW ATP EXAMINATION RESULTS ARE DETERMINED



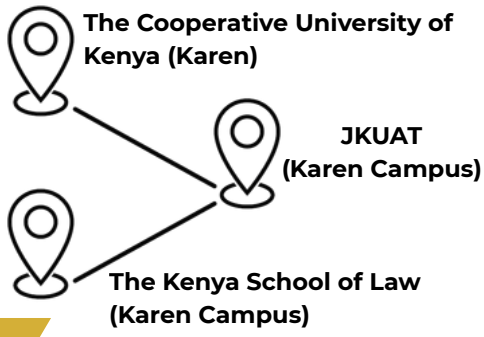
A GLIMPSE INTO THE APRIL 2026 ATP EXAMINATION CYCLE

by Peter Kipyegon

At the stroke of midday on Tuesday, 21st April 2026, the minute hand completed its final, fateful sweep. In that suspended instant, time itself seemed to hold its breath—then, suddenly, the piercing alarm shattered the silence, echoing through every examination room. The April 2026 Advocates' Training Programme (ATP) examination was finally over.

What followed was an eruption of raw human emotion. Ululations rose triumphantly into the air, colliding with heavy sighs of relief that seemed to drain weeks—months—of relentless strain. Some sat frozen, overwhelmed by the moment; others exhaled deeply, as though unburdened of an invisible weight. It was a powerful crescendo marking the end of an arduous intellectual trial—the kind that tests not only knowledge, but endurance, resolve and spirit.

April 2026 ATP Examination Centres



Each centre served as a hub of intense concentration, where aspiring advocates engaged rigorously with complex legal problems under strict time constraints. Invigilators maintained order and adherence to examination protocols, ensuring a uniform experience for all candidates.

As the dust now settles, attention turns to the next phase—the anticipation of results. For many, this marks a critical step toward admission to the Bar and the beginning of a professional journey in the legal field. Regardless of the outcome, the April 2026 ATP examination cycle stands as a testament to the resilience, discipline and ambition of its candidates.

Council wishes all the candidates the very best.

Candidates sitting for the bar exams in April

ATP EXAMINATION SAFEGUARDS

Upholding Article 10 and Article 232 through Fairness, Transparency, and Accountability

by Josphat Waithaka

The Council of Legal Education (CLE), established under the Legal Education Act, Cap. 16B, is mandated to regulate legal education and training in Kenya, including the licensing and supervision of legal education providers, the recognition of legal education qualifications, and the administration of the Advocates Training Programme (ATP) Examination.

The Council administers the ATP Examination pursuant to the enabling legal framework obtaining pursuant to the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, as well as the Legal Education Act, Cap. 16B, and the Advocates Act, Cap. 16.

As the gateway to entry into the legal profession, the ATP Examination processes reflect the constitutional values end to end.

At the core of this framework is the deliberate integration of Article 10 on national values and Article 232 on the values and principles of public service, which collectively guide CLE in ensuring that the examination process is not only technically sound but also constitutionally compliant.

Towards this end, the Council ensures that it upholds values of equity, equality and inclusiveness throughout its examination administration cycles, which ordinarily occur in April and November of each year.

ATP Candidates sitting for the bar exams

All ATP candidates are subjected to a fair, uniform, and non-discriminatory assessment process. Examination design, administration, and marking are guided by standardized criteria that are consistently applied, hence, ensuring that no candidate is advantaged or disadvantaged based on personal characteristics.

In addition, CLE has also put in place intervention measures for candidates with special needs, including appropriate accommodation to ensure equitable participation in the examination process.

Upholding Article 10 and Article 232 through Fairness, Transparency, and Accountability Cont'd

by Josphat Waithaka

Such accommodation includes provision for large fonts for candidates with visual impairment, typists for candidates who have lost ability to either write or type by their own limbs, and provision of Jaws and NVDA software applications for visually impaired candidates who use laptops to type their answers, among other measures.

Through these deliberate measures, CLE strives to promote equal opportunity in access to its examination processes, accommodate diverse candidate needs, and safeguard the rights of all candidates, thereby reinforcing fairness in both process and outcome.

In all its operations, integrity remains a central pillar of the ATP Examination processes. In this regard, the Council engages qualified professionals as service providers through merit-based and competitive processes that prioritize competence, independence and objectivity, in line with the Council's constitutional obligations.

All service providers, including setters, invigilators, supervisors, markers and moderators who are engaged in the examination processes are required to not only meet professional qualifications but also uphold and embody the values and principles set out under Articles 10 and 232 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

All the service providers sign confidentiality and conflict of interest forms to ensure that their integrity remains unimpeachable.

In this regard, Council exhorts all the service providers to ensure that they act with integrity and accountability, discharge their duties impartially, avoid acts that put them in situations of conflict of interest, and adhere to strict confidentiality standards. These requirements ensure that all actors within the examination processes not only align with constitutional obligations but also reinforce public trust and confidence.

"Through accountability, transparency and inclusiveness, legal education strengthens public trust in the justice system."

Upholding Article 10 and Article 232 through Fairness, Transparency, and Accountability Cont'd

by Josphat Waithaka

Further, Council has also imbued its examination processes with values of transparency and accountability. The Council of Legal Education operates within clearly defined procedures governing test item development, marking and moderation, hence, ensuring that each stage of the process is not only documented and verifiable but also aligned with approved standards.

In this regard, multi-layered oversight mechanisms, including internal and external moderation, provide additional assurances that decisions involving examination processes are based strictly on objective criteria and not personal whims.

This structured approach ensures that both CLE and all service providers remain accountable for their roles and that outcomes are consistent, fair and defensible.

In furtherance of constitutional obligations, CLE upholds the principle of access to information by ensuring that candidates and stakeholders receive timely, accurate and clear communication regarding the examination processes.

Towards this end, Council ensures that relevant information is disseminated through official channels and that such information is also accessible through other platforms including social media, website and respective candidates' portals.

Candidates during an engagement session with CLE at Kenya School of Law

Mechanisms such as e-ticketing, telephone and WhatsApp messaging, are in place to offer effective and efficient mechanisms for responses that relate to inquiries and complaints in a structured and timely manner.

This commitment enhances transparency, supports informed participation and strengthens public confidence in the examination system.

> **"Excellence in legal training begins with equal opportunity, professional oversight and commitment to the rule of law."**

Upholding Article 10 and Article 232 through Fairness, Transparency, and Accountability Cont'd

by Josphat Waithaka

The ATP Examination is therefore not merely a professional assessment, but a constitutional process grounded in the principles of equity, equality, inclusiveness, integrity, transparency, accountability and access to information.

Through deliberate systems, professional oversight and unwavering adherence to obligations arising pursuant to Articles 10 and 232, the Council safeguards the credibility of the qualification and reinforces public trust in the legal profession.

> ***The ATP Examination is not just a professional assessment; it is a constitutional process grounded in fairness, integrity and public trust.***

In doing so, CLE ensures that those people who get admitted to be Advocates of the High Court of Kenya not only meet the required professional standards but also embody the constitutional values that define the administration of justice in Kenya.

ATP Candidate engaging CLE in a Q & A session

CLE Team with different stakeholders after a review meeting early this year

THE CLE EXPLAINER

How The Directorate of Standards, Licensing, Supervision & Compliance is Championing Excellence in Legal Education

By Moses Muchiri

The Standards, Licensing, Supervision & Compliance (SLSC) Directorate stands at the heart of the Council of Legal Education's mission to transform and elevate legal education in Kenya.

As the primary implementer of the Council's mandate under the Legal Education Act, Chapter 16B, Laws of Kenya, the Directorate plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of the legal profession in the country.

Our Core Mission

The SLSC Directorate exists to support and promote the highest possible standards in legal education and training across Kenya.

Through rigorous quality assurance processes and support systems, we work alongside legal education providers and stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement and excellence in the preparation of Kenya's legal professionals.

> ***The SLSC Directorate stands at the centre of advancing quality legal education in Kenya by promoting excellence, compliance and continuous improvement in the training of future legal professionals.***

Mandate and Responsibilities

Under Section 8(1) of the Legal Education Act, the Directorate is charged with delivering five of the Council's six core mandates:

1. Regulation and Oversight
2. Licensing Authority
3. Active Supervision
4. Policy Advisory Role
5. International Recognition

Standards Development and Enforcement

The Directorate oversees the development and enforcement of comprehensive standards covering every aspect of legal education, including:

- Accreditation criteria for legal education providers
- Curriculum design and modes of instruction
- Examination quality and assessment methods
- Harmonization of legal education programs across institutions
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks for programs and providers

THE CLE EXPLAINER

How The Directorate of Standards, Licensing, Supervision & Compliance is Championing Excellence in Legal Education Cont'd

By Moses Muchiri

Currently, the Directorate is in various stages of developing the following regulatory instruments and policies in legal education:

- The Legal Education (Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations
- Advocates Training Programme Regulations, 2025
- Advocates Training Programme (ATP) Policy
- The Legal Education (Paralegal Education) Regulations
- The ATP Curriculum
- The Paralegal Education Curriculum

Services We Provide

The SLSC Directorate offers a range of essential services to institutions, students, and legal professionals:

- Institutional Licensing
- Foreign Qualification Recognition
- Experiential Learning Certification
- Program Clearance
- Curriculum Review
- Pupillage Verification

Quality Commitments

1. We process licensing applications efficiently
2. We conduct thorough quality audits and inspections
3. We respond promptly to applications for recognition of foreign qualifications
4. We research legal education and training matters
5. We disseminate licensing information to support institutional applicants

The Directorate of Standards, Licensing, Supervision & Compliance during a previous audit

EYES ON CLE MANDATE

CLE Audits UoN Kisumu Campus

CLE and UoN Teams after the audit

The Council of Legal Education conducted a quality assurance audit at the University of Nairobi, Kisumu Campus, Faculty of Law, following the expiry of the institution's Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) training licence.

The audit was undertaken in line with CLE's statutory mandate under the Legal Education Act, CAP 16B, to regulate, supervise and license legal education and training in Kenya.

The exercise follows a similar audit conducted at the University's Parklands Campus in March 2026.

The audit was led by Prof. Busalile Jack Mwimali alongside Ms. Annah Konuche, Director of Standards, Licensing, Supervision and Compliance, together with officers from the Directorate of Standards, Licensing, Supervision and Compliance.

The University of Nairobi was represented by Prof. Winifred Kamau and members of the institution's leadership and faculty.

The exercise forms part of CLE's continued commitment to ensuring quality legal education, compliance with regulatory standards and continuous improvement among legal education providers in Kenya.

> ***"Strong legal institutions are built through quality assurance, integrity and continuous improvement."***

UoN Audit Gallery

CLE and UoN Teams after the audit

CLE and UoN Team in a meeting during the audit exercise

CLE Team auditing UoN Kisumu Campus Moot Court

CLE Team auditing library resources

CLE CEO Prof. Jack Mwimali and Prof. Winifred Kamau, Dean of the Faculty of Law making a facility tour

CLE Team during a facility tour at UoN during the audit

> ***"Great law schools do not just teach the law they shape ethical, competent and transformative legal professionals."***

EYES ON THE MANDATE

CLE Conducts Quality Assurance Audit at Rongo University

CLE and Rongo University Teams after the audit

The Council of Legal Education recently conducted a comprehensive quality assurance audit at Rongo University following the University's application expressing interest in offering the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) programme.

The exercise was undertaken in line with CLE's statutory mandate under the Legal Education Act, CAP 16B, to regulate, supervise and license legal education and training in Kenya.

The audit assessed key areas necessary for the delivery of quality legal education and training, including curriculum design, governance structures, staffing capacity, infrastructure readiness, institutional capacity and library resources in line with the Legal Education (Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations, 2016.

The CLE delegation was received by Prof. Samuel Gudu together with Prof. Daniel Tarus and members of the University leadership team.

The audit forms part of CLE's quality assurance process aimed at ensuring institutions offering legal education programmes meet the required regulatory and academic standards. An inspection will be conducted upon submission and review of the audit report.

CLE CEO during a facility tour at Rongo University

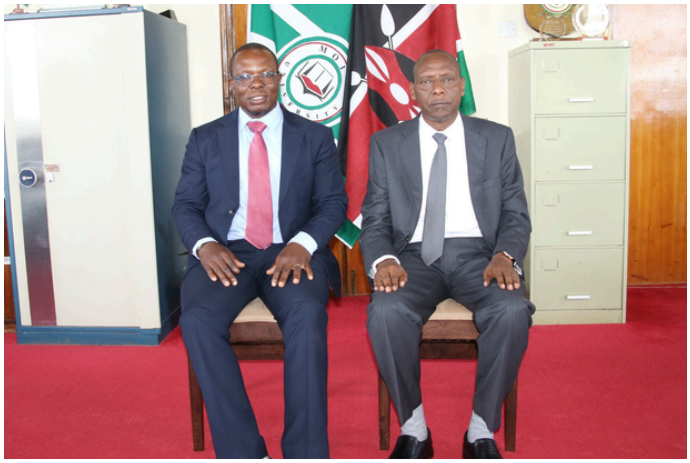
CLE BULLETIN

CLE CEO MAKES COURTESY VISIT TO MOI UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

Prof. Jack Mwimali, Secretary/CEO of the Council of Legal Education, paid a courtesy visit to the Moi University School of Law in Eldoret.

During the visit, Prof. Mwimali held discussions with the University leadership led by Prof. Kiplagat Kotut on the progress of the School of Law and matters relating to legal education and training in Kenya.

The engagement focused on CLE's regulatory mandate to license, supervise and ensure compliance among legal education providers. Key issues discussed included CLE's report to the School of Law, quality training of legal professionals and the renewal of the School of Law training licence.



CLE CEO Prof. Jack Mwimali with Prof. Kiplagat Kotut, Moi University Vice-Chancellor.

CLE CEO Prof. Jack Mwimali with Moi University Leadership Team

CLE CEO Prof. Jack Mwimali during a meeting with Moi University Leadership Team

CLE BULLETIN

CLE UNDERGOES FIRST SURVEILLANCE AUDIT BY KEBS

The Council of Legal Education completed its first surveillance audit by the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) to assess compliance with the ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System standard.

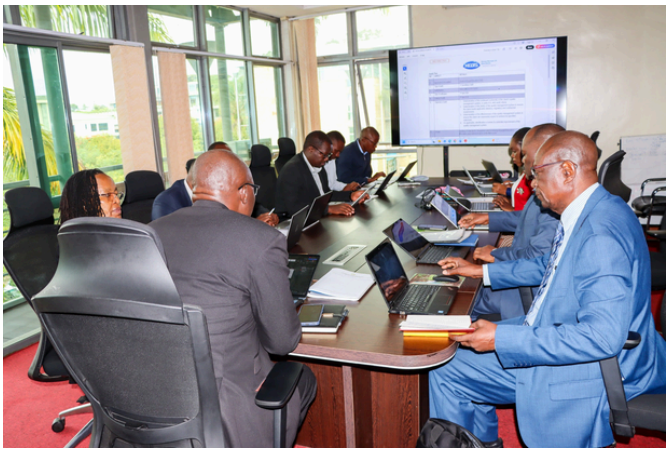
The audit reviewed CLE's key functional areas and assessed the effectiveness of its Quality Management System in supporting quality service delivery, compliance and continuous improvement in the execution of its mandate under the Legal Education Act, CAP 16B.

Speaking at the conclusion of the audit, Dr. Felix Odhiambo, Director of Examinations, commended CLE Directorates and Divisions for their commitment to ISO standards and institutional excellence.

Duncan Nalwenge, MR with Representatives from KEBS, led by Anthony Maritim and Samuel Ongidi

CLE Team during the KEBS Surveillance Audit

CLE Team during the KEBS Surveillance Audit



CLE Team during the KEBS Surveillance Audit

CLE BULLETIN

CLE AND KENYA SCHOOL OF LAW STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION

This afternoon, Prof. Busalile Jack Mwimali, Secretary/CEO of the Council of Legal Education, hosted Isaac Kuloba of the Kenya School of Law for discussions on areas of mutual interest and collaboration between the two institutions.

The engagement focused on strengthening cooperation in the delivery of legal education and training in Kenya. Under the Legal Education Act, 2012, CLE serves as the regulator and administrator of the Advocates Training Programme (ATP) Examination, while KSL is responsible for ATP training and preparing law graduates for legal practice and the ATP examinations.

CLE & KSL Teams during the meeting held at CLE Offices

CLE Team members Mr. Stephen Kariuki & Ms. Victoria Wahu attending the meeting

KSL Leadership Team during the meeting

Mr. Isaac Kuloba Ag. Director/Chief Executive Officer of The Kenya School of Law and KSL Leadership Team during the meeting

Quality Assurance in the ATP Examination:

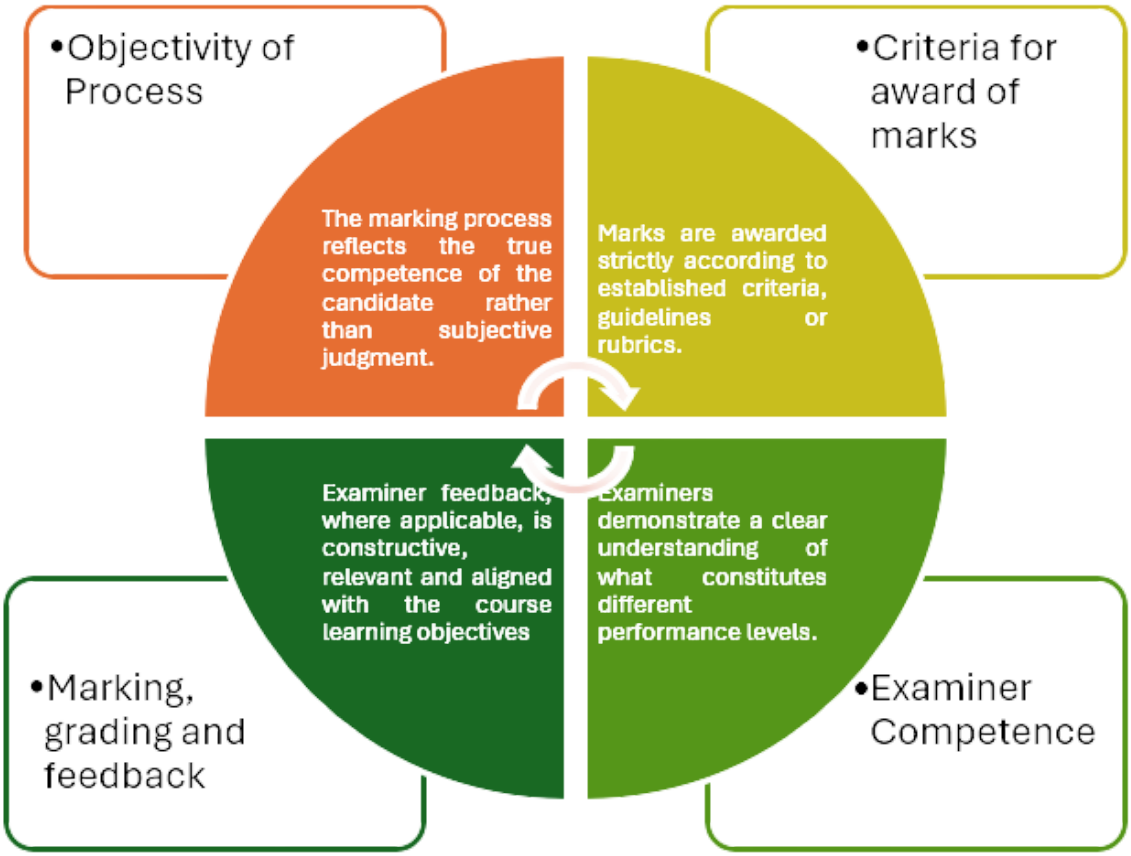
by Peter Kipyegon

In education and training, assessment exists for different purposes. In the Advocates' Training Programme and like in many other professional fields of training, assessment is designed to measure the practical aspects of the course which are demanded of one and are related to the readiness for the job market.

This is the overarching thread that runs through the art and science of the ATP examination! Two aspects come into play: Quality and consistency. These are the fundamental pillars which ensure that that the products of an assessment-examination results, are fair, credible and meaningful across all candidates.

Quality in ATP Examination is realized in the accuracy, validity and reliability of the assessment process. Without quality, results can become misleading as candidates may be over- or under-assessed, undermining the very purpose of the examination.

Dimensions of Quality in the ATP Examination



Quality Assurance in the ATP Examination Cont'd

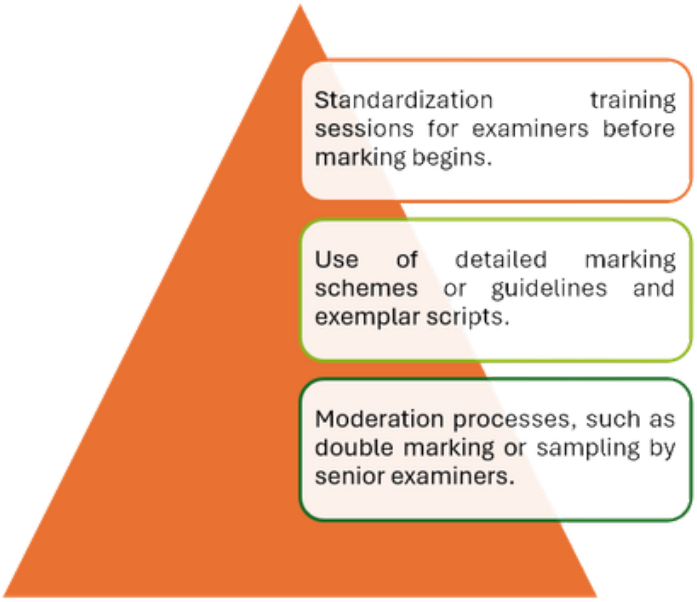
by Peter Kipyegon

Consistency in ATP Examination Marking

In any assessment, consistency is a crucial self-regulating process. It eliminates any marker discretion that may arise due to inter-marker rubric interpretation. Consistency makes assessment fair as opposed to random or discretionary by ensuring that all candidates are judged using the same standards, regardless of who marks their work or when it is marked.

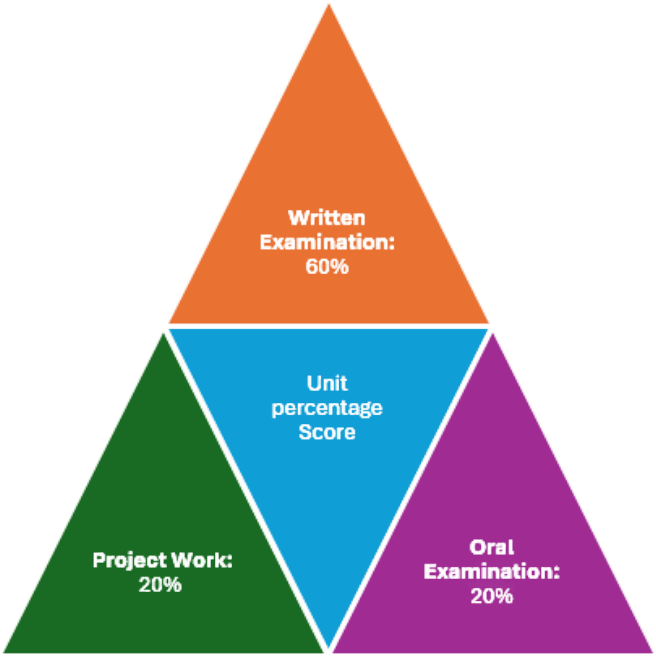
In the assessment of ATP candidates, Council has adopted the ten guiding approaches proposed by the United Kingdom's Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code for Higher Education on Assessment.

Consistency at a Glance



Grading and Weighting in the ATP Examination

For a regular candidate, the final unit score is computed by adding the three individual component scores. Candidates must complete both the Oral and Project components before sitting for the written exams.



ATP candidates attending an engagement with Council of Legal Education

Quality Assurance in the ATP Examination cont'd

by Peter Kipyegon

Pass Mark: A candidate must achieve a minimum of **50%** in each unit.

Grading System: Results are categorized as **Pass (P)** or **Fail (F)**.

In the ATP therefore, Assessment is not merely an academic exercise, but a rigorous process aimed at ensuring that candidates are fully prepared for professional legal practice. By grounding the examination system in the twin pillars of quality and consistency, the ATP guarantees that its outcomes are fair, reliable, and reflective of each candidate's true competence.

This ensures that what is assessed is relevant and accurately measured, while consistency ensures that all candidates are judged by the same standards. Together, these principles uphold the integrity and credibility of the examination process, ultimately producing advocates who meet the required professional standards and are ready to serve in the legal field.

ATP candidates preparing to sit for ATP Exams

NEW GAZETTEMENT TIMELINES

1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
July- Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan- March	April- June
October	January	April	July

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

CLE in the Media

The Council of Legal Education was featured in The Standard Newspaper Pull Out

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

ACCREDITED LEGAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS IN KENYA

What it takes for a Law School to be accredited in Kenya

By Moses Muchiri

In Kenya as in many parts of the world, the institution of the School (or Faculty) of Law remains the main construct for delivery of foundational instruction and doctrinal grounding in law. As such the School of Law is the primary training ground (or perhaps 'breeding' ground) for the conversion of lay thinkers into legal thinkers and legal problem-solvers.

But starting and running a law school in Kenya is no simple undertaking. The Council of Legal Education (Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations 2016 (under revision), have established rigorous quality standards that legal education providers must meet to obtain and maintain their licence from the Council of Legal Education (Council). These standards place Kenya among jurisdictions with robust and widely recognized regulatory frameworks for legal education, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Africa.

This article highlights the key standards that law schools in Kenya are required to comply with in order to be recognized and obtain accreditation by the Council.

The Core Requirements

Governance, Vision and Strategic Planning

Every law school must have a clear vision and mission aligned with CLE standards and aligned with the University's overall vision and mission. Schools must also have a three-year budget plan, and defined governance structures. For university-level programmes, a Dean with at least Associate Professor qualifications must supervise the programme. This governance requirement mirrors practices in the United States, where the American Bar Association (ABA) mandates robust institutional leadership, though the ABA conducts comprehensive reviews every tenth year rather than Kenya's more frequent two-to-three-year audit cycle. Schools of Law must also develop and mainstream adequate quality assurance controls.

Schools must develop strategies planning instruments that enunciate the strategic priorities for the school in each planning cycle along with verifiable monitoring and implementation frameworks.

Academic Staff Standards

The regulations are uncompromising on faculty qualifications and workload distribution. Diploma programmes require lecturers with at least an undergraduate law degree, while degree programmes demand staff with masters degrees. For masters programmes, lecturers must hold doctorates or possess ten years' experience with a strong publication record.

Crucially, the staff-to-student ratio must be 1:15—a benchmark more stringent than many jurisdictions. For comparison, South African law schools regulated by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and Legal Practice Council (LPC) focus on overall institutional capacity rather than prescriptive ratios, while the UK's Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) emphasizes outcomes-based regulation following reforms that introduced the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) in 2021.

Kenya's regulations further stipulate that faculty workload must be distributed as 60% teaching, 30% research, and 10% professional services. Additionally, institutions must allocate 2.5% of their recurrent budget to staff development, ensuring continuous professional growth—a practice that aligns with international best practices but is rarely codified as explicitly as in Kenya's framework.

Infrastructure and Resources

Compliance requires well-equipped facilities including adequately lit and ventilated classrooms, moot courts, libraries, and accessible facilities for persons with disabilities. The library alone must accommodate one-third of the student population simultaneously, maintain up-to-date law reports including Kenya Law Reports, East African Law Reports, and All England Law Reports, and stock at least five copies of reference materials for each core unit.

This infrastructure-heavy approach contrasts with the evolving landscape in the UK, where the SRA's 2021 reforms shifted from prescriptive "Qualifying Law Degree" requirements toward competency-based assessment through the SQE, reducing the emphasis on institutional facilities in favour of demonstrated professional competence.

Curriculum Rigor and Contact Hours

Law schools must offer sixteen prescribed core courses including Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Contracts, Torts, Evidence, Jurisprudence, and other foundational subjects for undergraduate programmes. Contact hours are strictly regulated: certificate programmes require a minimum of 480 hours, diplomas 640 hours, and undergraduate degrees a minimum of 1,040 contact hours spread over four years—or six years for evening programmes.

Kenya's approach to core curriculum bears resemblance to the ABA's Standards for Approval of Law Schools, which mandate specific competencies including knowledge and understanding of substantive law, legal analysis and reasoning, and professional skills. However, the ABA's recent revisions (particularly Standards 303(b) and (c) adopted in 2022) increasingly emphasize the formation of professional identity, cross-cultural competence, and elimination of bias—dimensions that Kenya's 2016 regulations address primarily through experiential learning provisions rather than as explicit curriculum mandates.

South Africa's Legal Practice Act of 2014 similarly prescribes foundational subjects for the four-year LLB degree, but adds compulsory practical vocational training including community service—a requirement Kenya addresses through its Advocates Training Programme rather than at the undergraduate level.

Financial Commitment

Beyond tuition, institutions must budget strategically across multiple areas. Kenya's regulations mandate specific percentages of the recurrent budget for critical functions: 5% for research and publications, 5% for library resources, 5% for student support services, and 10% for capital and infrastructure development. This cumulative 25% allocation for quality assurance activities represents a substantial institutional commitment that exceeds explicit requirements in most comparative jurisdictions, where such allocations are guided by accreditation standards but not typically prescribed by percentage.

Admission Standards and Academic Progression

Kenya maintains clear academic thresholds at each level. For undergraduate law degrees, applicants must achieve a mean grade of C+ (Plus) in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education with a minimum grade of B Plain in English or Kiswahili. The regulations also provide pathways through diploma programmes, foreign qualifications recognition, and experiential learning certification for individuals with at least ten years' experience in law.

The recognition of experiential learning represents a progressive feature that acknowledges alternative pathways into legal education—a principle the UK's SQE system has embraced more fully by allowing candidates from any degree background to qualify as solicitors through centralized examination and two years' qualifying work experience.

Credit Transfers and Foreign Qualifications

Kenya's framework permits credit transfers with specific limitations: diploma programmes allow transfers equivalent to six months of coursework, while degree programmes cap transfers at two years' worth of credits. Credits must have been earned within four years of the transfer application, and transfers cannot occur across certificate programmes or in university common core units.

Foreign qualifications undergo rigorous evaluation against Kenyan standards, including verification of the foreign institution's accreditation status through competent authorities. Kenyans who have practiced law abroad for at least five years may apply for recognition, though the Council may require remedial programmes where foreign standards don't satisfy Kenyan benchmarks. This gatekeeping function parallels South Africa's South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) process and Canada's National Committee on Accreditation (NCA) assessment for foreign-trained lawyers.

Regular Quality Audits and Licence Renewal

Accreditation isn't permanent. The CLE conducts quality audits between two to three years after initial licensing—more frequent than the ABA's ten-year comprehensive review cycle but potentially more responsive to quality drift. Schools must apply for licence renewal at least one year before expiry, submitting detailed progress reports, tracer studies on graduate employment rates, evidence of stakeholder engagement in curriculum review, and updated curricula.

Council of Legal Education Council Members with Julius Migos Ogamba, CS, Education during the inaugural Conference on the Future of Legal Education and Training in Kenya and the region

This continuous quality assurance model reflects international trends toward outcomes-based assessment. The tracer study requirement, measuring graduate absorption in the labour market, represents a data-driven accountability mechanism increasingly adopted globally. South Africa's Legal Practice Council similarly emphasizes practical outcomes through mandatory pupillage and board examinations before admission to practice.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

The regulations provide for suspension or outright revocation of licences where institutions fail to maintain standards. Schools facing suspension receive formal notice and must submit a recovery plan; those whose licences are revoked must submit closure plans within two months, ensuring student welfare through either "teaching out" current students within one academic year or facilitating their transfer to accredited institutions.

This enforcement regime, with its graduated sanctions and student protection measures, demonstrates regulatory maturity. The requirement to publish suspension and revocation notices in the Kenya Gazette and national newspapers ensures public accountability—a transparency practice that exceeds requirements in some jurisdictions where accreditation actions may receive less public visibility.

Unique Provisions: Distance Learning and Experiential Recognition

While the current standards primarily govern residential programmes, they explicitly permit online and distance learning programmes subject to Council accreditation. This forward-looking provision, predating the COVID-19 pandemic's acceleration of online legal education, positions Kenya to regulate emerging delivery modes—an area where the ABA granted "acquiescence" for distance education J.D. programs only recently, reflecting the conservative evolution of legal education regulation globally. The Council is currently working on developing substantive standards for open and distance learning in legal education.

The experiential learning pathway, allowing individuals with ten years' legal work to obtain certificates equivalent to diploma status or enabling career transposition, represents a distinctive feature. This recognition of practice-based expertise offers flexibility uncommon in civil law-influenced jurisdictions but aligns with common law traditions of alternative qualification routes.

International Context and Comparative Strengths

Kenya's regulatory framework demonstrates several distinctive strengths when compared internationally:

Prescriptive Clarity: Unlike the UK's outcomes-focused SRA regime or the ABA's principles-based standards, Kenya's regulations provide granular specifications on staff ratios, contact hours, and budget allocations. This reduces ambiguity but potentially limits institutional innovation.

Resource Intensity: The combined requirements for library stock, infrastructure, faculty qualifications, and budget allocations create high barriers to entry that may ensure quality but could limit access in a developing economy context.

Continuous Oversight: Kenya's two-to-three-year audit cycle exceeds the frequency of reviews in most jurisdictions, enabling responsive quality assurance but potentially increasing regulatory burden on institutions.

Research Emphasis: The dual requirements that faculty allocate 30% of time to research and that institutions dedicate 5% of budgets to research activities position legal scholarship as integral to legal education—a value increasingly emphasized globally following the ABA's Standard 303 reforms promoting scholarly engagement.

Conclusion

Council's standards ensure that Kenya's legal education maintains competitive rigor while producing graduates equipped to serve justice domestically and globally. For aspiring legal education providers, compliance demands substantial investment in human resources, infrastructure, curriculum development and review and continuous quality improvement. The Kenyan framework represents a hybrid model combining the prescriptive detail characteristic of civil law regulatory traditions with the quality assurance mechanisms and academic autonomy principles found in common law jurisdictions.

The take home is that legal education in Kenya is not a casual business venture—it is a heavily regulated professional endeavour requiring institutional commitment to excellence, substantial capital investment, and demonstrated capacity to meet international benchmarks. The aim of Council's rigorous standards is to position Kenyan law graduates to compete globally while ensuring they possess the foundational knowledge, practical skills, and ethical grounding necessary for professional practice in an increasingly complex legal landscape.

The writer is the Deputy Director, Standards Licensing Supervision and Compliance Directorate, CLE

Vision
Innovative Legal Professionals Transforming Society.

Mission
To ensure quality legal education through responsive regulation and administration of Bar Examination.

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

ACCREDITED LEGAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS IN KENYA

CLE charts bold reforms to transform legal education

Mike Kihaki, Nairobi

The Council of Legal Education (CLE) is charting an ambitious path to reshape legal training in Kenya, unveiling a bold five-year vision anchored on reform, inclusivity, and modernization of the country's legal education system.

The Council's Chief Executive Officer, Prof. Busalile Jack Mwimali, says the institution is determined to ensure that future lawyers are not only academically competent but also responsive to the evolving demands of society.

At the center of this transformation, the Council's strategy is heavily focused on reviewing and modernizing existing regulations governing legal education.

"The Council of Legal Education is poised to redefine legal training in Kenya ensuring that the next generation of lawyers is not only competent but also equipped to meet the demands of a changing world," Prof. Mwimali said.

According to him, the current framework is undergoing a comprehensive overhaul to align it with emerging trends, constitutional principles and the realities of modern legal practice.

> Our core responsibility is to ensure that legal education in Kenya meets the highest standards

"We are committed to ensuring our regulations are fair, transparent, and responsive to the needs of stakeholders. By the end of this financial year, we aim to have them tabled in Parliament," he said.

A key pillar of the reforms is the decentralization of the Advocates Training Programme (ATP), which has traditionally been offered exclusively at the Kenya School of Law.

Under the new plan, CLE intends to accredit and license additional institutions to offer the programme, a move expected to expand access while maintaining strict quality controls.

"In the next five years, we envision a more accessible system where multiple institutions can offer the Advocates Training Programme under strict regulation," Prof. Mwimali revealed.

The Council is also preparing for a major shift in Kenya's education system, the transition to Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET).

This change is expected to introduce a new cohort of learners into legal education, requiring significant adjustments in curriculum design, teaching methods, and assessment models.

"We are proactively aligning our systems to accommodate students from the new education framework. Our goal is to ensure a seamless transition that enhances the quality of legal training," he said.

Inclusivity has also emerged as a central theme in the Council's future agenda with Prof. Mwimali emphasizing the need to make legal education accessible to marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"Quality education must also be inclusive. We are exploring ways to support those who may not have had equal opportunities but have the potential to excel in the legal profession," he noted.

As part of its reform agenda, CLE is opening up its operations to greater public scrutiny and stakeholder engagement, a move aimed at building trust and improving transparency in its processes.

"For a long time, our work has not been fully understood. We are now committed to engaging the public and demystifying our processes," Prof. Mwimali said.

Beyond future plans, the CEO highlighted the Council's critical role as both a regulator and an examining body, a dual mandate derived from the Legal Education Act. This role, he said, places CLE at the heart of maintaining standards in legal training across the country.

"Our core responsibility is to ensure that legal education in Kenya meets the highest standards, from diploma to postgraduate levels. We set those standards, enforce them, and examine those who aspire to join the legal profession," he explained.

Over the years, CLE has made notable strides in expanding access to legal

continued on page 8>>

CLE CEO Prof. Jack Mwimali Planting a memorial tree after the launch of Zetech Law School in March this year

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

ACCREDITED LEGAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS IN KENYA

How the Council of Legal Education shapes Kenya's legal profession

By Mike Kihaki, Nairobi

The Council of Legal Education (CLE) remains the firm regulator and examiner of legal education and training in Kenya, standing at the intersection of education and justice to ensure that every lawyer entering the profession is properly trained, examined, and ethically grounded.

At a time when the demand for legal services is expanding and the justice system is evolving, CLE's role has become increasingly critical. CLE Secretary/Chief Executive Officer Prof. Busalile Jack Mwimali said its broad mandate ensures uniform standards across institutions, safeguarding the credibility of Kenya's legal profession.

"At its core, the Council operates under two key mandates: regulation and examination. As a regulator, we set standards for legal education and ensure institutions comply with them. As an examining body, we assess candidates who wish to join the legal profession."

From setting standards for universities to examining aspiring advocates, CLE continues to shape the quality, structure, and integrity of legal education across the country.

Established as a state corporation under the Legal Education Act, CLE derives its authority from statute to regulate, supervise, and guide legal education at all levels from diploma programmes to postgraduate studies.

This dual role places CLE at the center of the legal training ecosystem. Any institution seeking to offer legal education in Kenya whether a university offering a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B), a college providing diploma courses, or even the Kenya School of Law, must first obtain a license from the Council.

The accreditation process is rigorous and detailed, reflecting the Council's commitment to quality. Institutions are required to submit comprehensive applications outlining their infrastructure, academic staff, curriculum design, and capacity to deliver legal training effectively.

"We look at everything from lecture halls, moot court and libraries to the qualifications of lecturers and the structure of the curriculum," Prof. Mwimali explained. Before approval is granted, curricula are carefully reviewed to ensure alignment with national standards and regulatory frameworks, including those of the Commission for University Education.

However, CLE maintains a balance between regulation and innovation, allowing institutions flexibility in designing programmes."We are not prescriptive. We set parameters, but we also engage institutions to understand their unique approaches and encourage creativity in legal education," he said.

The Council's oversight does not end with accreditation, regular inspections and audits are conducted to ensure institutions maintain the required standards.Where deficiencies are identified, CLE adopts a collaborative approach, working with institutions to improve rather than penalize them.

"We prefer a facilitative approach. Rather than penalizing institutions, we guide them towards improvement," Prof. Mwimali noted. Beyond its regulatory function, CLE plays a pivotal role in examining future advocates. After earning an undergraduate law degree, graduates must enroll in the Advocates Training Programme (ATP) at the Kenya School of Law.

While the School handles training, it is CLE that sets, administers, and marks the final examinations that determine entry into the legal profession.He stated that the examination process is designed to uphold fairness, credibility, and transparency.

Papers are set by experienced legal practitioners drawn from the judiciary, academia, prosecution, and private practice.They are then reviewed and moderated to ensure clarity and consistency.

Marking follows a conveyor-belt system, where multiple examiners assess different sections of each script to eliminate bias and enhance objectivity."We involve experts from the judiciary, academia, and legal practice to ensure the process is balanced and credible," Prof. Mwimali said.

To further strengthen accountability, candidates dissatisfied with their results are allowed to apply for remarking, a process that has, in some cases, led to adjustments in marks.

The Council also plays a crucial role in assessing foreign legal qualifications where individuals who study law abroad must have their credentials evaluated by CLE before they can practice in Kenya.

"If you studied law outside Kenya, you must come through us for recognition of foreign qualifications. We determine whether your qualifications meet the set standards," Prof. Mwimali explained. In certain cases, individuals may be exempted from parts of the local training requirements if their qualifications are deemed equivalent, highlighting CLE's role in balancing global standards with local requirements.

Beyond education and examinations, CLE also serves as an advisor to the government on matters related to legal training. Through the Attorney General's office, it contributes to policy and legislative reforms aimed at aligning legal education with current professional demands.

Despite its wide-ranging mandate, the Council operates with a relatively lean workforce of about 45 staff members. To bridge capacity gaps, it relies heavily on a network of external experts, particularly in examination processes.

Prof. Jack Mwimali, CEO, Council of Legal Education

However, the journey has not been without challenges. Financial constraints remain a major hurdle, especially given the high cost of maintaining secure and credible examination systems. Additionally, some institutions struggle to meet the Council's stringent standards due to economic pressures, leading to resistance or delays in compliance.

"We engage stakeholders extensively. Through consultations and public participation, we ensure our policies are inclusive and well-informed," Prof. Mwimali said, emphasizing CLE's commitment to dialogue and collaboration.

Today, Kenya boasts more than 20 accredited universities offering law degrees, alongside several institutions providing postgraduate and diploma programmes, a testament to CLE's expanding reach and influence.

He observed that as the legal profession continues to evolve, the Council is adapting to emerging trends, including competency-based education and the potential decentralization of training programmes.

These changes are expected to further enhance access while maintaining quality by ensuring that every lawyer is thoroughly trained and fairly examined. CLE remains a cornerstone of Kenya's legal system, quietly but firmly upholding the standards that define the profession.

Council of Legal Education Council Members, CEO and staff members during the farewell ceremony of the former CEO, Ms Jennifer Gibi

HIGHER EDUCATION LOANS BOARD
HELB
FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNCIL OF LEGAL EDUCATION

BAR EXAMINATION LOAN

The Bar Exam Loan [BEL] is **available for the Advocate Training Program Examination Registration fees only.** It earns an **interest rate of 4% per annum** and matures **1.5 years** after disbursement.

BEL Repayment

1. Repay BEL using USSD Code *642#, HELB Mobile App, Loanee Self-Serve Portal, and
2. Employers Portal for those being deducted through payroll deductions.
3. For Kenyans in diaspora, repay through Sendwave, World Remit and/or Bank deposit.
4. Upon completion of loan repayment, clearance is done by HELB.

For inquiries and repayment support:

1. **Visit:** www.cle.or.ke
2. **Email:** support@cle.or.ke
3. **Email:** contactcentre@helb.co.ke
4. **Call:** 0711052000
5. **HELB Portal:** www.helb.co.ke

EMPOWERING DREAMS

www.helb.co.ke Anniversary Towers University Way USSD *642#
+254711052000 contactcentre@helb.co.ke @HELBPAGE

Crossing Hormuz

By Peter Kipyegon

Between the Persian Gulf,
And the Gulf of Oman,
Lies the Strait of Hormuz—
The world's most strategic
maritime chokepoint.
Three other corridors shape our lives:
The Suez Canal,
The Strait of Malacca,
The Panama Canal.
They guide the currents of commerce—
But Hormuz is different-
Are you aware?
Recent disruptions,
Reverberated across the globe.

Straits abound,
Often crossed unbeknownst,
Primary, secondary, university—
Each a channel carved with effort
and time.

Now you stand,
At one narrowest passage:
Hormuz.
Here, the waters tighten.
Fear and uncertainty drift close.
The risk of loss—
Time, effort, hope,
Looms like unseen reefs beneath
the surface.
Yet beyond this passage,
Waits the open sea—
The Arabian Sea,
Vast and unbound,
Where freedom stretches past
the horizon,
And possibility breathes.

All the long nights—
When pages whispered and lamps flickered,
When thoughts collided in restless waves,
Each hour delicate as glass—
Concepts flowing like currents,
Steady, then wild—
Each formula mastered, each theorem anchored—
All have shaped who you are becoming.
Now you sit at the edge of crossing,
The weight of tomorrow in your hands,
Trusting that the ATP examination—
This final strait—
Will judge you fairly.

Soon you will understand:
Knowledge is not only what pages hold,
But the courage to navigate uncertainty,
To steer through doubt without surrender.
And when at last you emerge,
Into the wide, waiting sea—
Having crossed the Strait of Hormuz—
You are more than a score.
More than a moment.
You are the journey endured,
The strength discovered,
The horizon ahead—
You are what you can be.

CONTACT US:

0719 - 150 - 000 or 0111-056-130

www.cle.or.ke

support@cle.or.ke or info@cle.or.ke

Karen Office Park, 2nd Floor

Social Media Handles

@CLE_Kenya

@cle.kenya

Council of Legal Education

@cle_kenya