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# Dual Qualifications and Single Remuneration: The Pains of Law Librarians in Nigerian University Libraries

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## Abstract:

The article discussed the dual qualifications requirements of Law Librarians, single remuneration, and the pains of Law Librarians in Nigerian University. The article also suggested ways of improving the welfare of Law Librarians in Nigerian University propose a career path and structure and special salary scale for Law Librarians in line with their dual qualifications, promotion of Law Librarians in line with their career path and structure instead of those of Librarianship. Finally, Law Librarians should be involved in the teaching of Legal Methods and Legal Research among others. And finally, Law Librarians should be involved in the teaching of legal method and legal research among others.

**Keywords:** Council of Legal Education, Dual Qualifications, Law Faculty, Law Librarians, Nigerian University Libraries, Policy Statement, Single Remuneration.

## 1. Introduction

The Law Faculty could be compared to a mini institution of its own, in that all the Principal Officers of the University are duly represented in the Faculty. For instance, the Dean of the Faculty represents the Vice-Chancellor, the Faculty Officer represents the Registrar, the Account Officer represents the Bursar, while the Law Librarian represents the University Librarian. Among all of them, the Law Librarian Office is the most important in the Faculty in that, dual qualifications in Law and Librarianship are required for the occupant of the office. Without a qualified Law Librarian, with dual qualifications, the Faculty of Law cannot be accredited by both the Council of Legal Education and the Nigerian University Commission. In other words, without a qualified Law Librarian, there is no Law Faculty. However, the Office of the Law Librarian is the most unreverent office in the Law Faculty. The Council of Legal Education policy statement describes succinctly the role of a Law Librarian thus:

*The Law Library should be headed by a Law Librarian, who is expected to have a Law degree as well as be a registered Librarian. He shall be a member of the Faculty Board and is expected to attend all academic meetings in the Faculty; Law Librarians as academic staff should be properly placed in line with their qualifications, with clear career progression.; the Office of the Law Librarian should always be well furnished; There should be a monthly imprest to run the Law Library; the Law Librarian as an academic staff of the Faculty should be actively involved in the teaching of research methods, use of Law Library and assist in conducting legal research; Selection and acquisition of legal resources should be done by the Law Librarian in collaboration with other academic staff of the Faculty and the University Librarian within the framework of the university procurement system; the Law Librarian shall organize orientation programmes for new Law students on the use of Law Library at the commencement of a new session; the Nigerian Law School on behalf of the Council of Legal Education shall continue to organize Annual Workshops to promote and enhance the necessary skills and knowledge required for effective and efficient delivery of modern Law Library services. attendance of Law Librarians at these workshops shall be mandatory... (Mamman, n.d).*

Despite this policy, most Law Librarians are not properly placed or designated in the University. There are situations where a Law Librarian with a Law degree, a call to Bar Certificate and a Master's degree in Library Science is placed on

Consolidated University Academic Salary Scale Structure (CONUASS 2) Salary Level or designated as an Assistant Librarian (Assistant Lecturer) or Librarian 11

## **2. Law Librarian And Qualification Requirements in Nigeria**

A Law Librarian is a legal information professional who works in various legal settings, including Law Schools, private law firms, and government libraries (The Legal Information Professional 2016). Olorunfemi (2016) opined that the term, Law Librarian is generally used to describe or identify the librarians attached to a Law Library to operate and provide access to legal sources housed in law libraries. In other words, Law Librarians are the persons who work to provide access to information sources and resources in law libraries. On the other hand, Urhibo (2017) defined Law Librarian as legal information professional that works in various legal fields including private law firms, Law Schools and government libraries. However, a Law Librarian in this context, is a qualified personnel who is trained in Law and Librarianship with vast knowledge and/or experience in the legal information resources and services and who is in charge of Faculty of Law Library or Library of other higher institutions or the Library of the Law School. In Nigeria, the Council of Legal Education stipulated that the Law Librarian should hold a degree in Law, in addition to the Masters degree in Library and Information Science. Therefore, the qualification required to work as a Law Librarian is a Master's in Library Science (MLS) and a Law Degree. Thus, to be a qualified Law Librarian, the candidate must be a qualified lawyer and a Librarian in Nigeria. Dada (2011) stated that a professional Law Librarian must have a good subject background in Law and Librarianship. Furthermore, Onoyeya and Ajayi (2015) also emphasize that Law Librarians are expected to have double degrees, specialized knowledge and expertise of legal sources and resources, and competencies in both Law and Librarianship. This is because, possession of academic and professional qualifications enables the Law Librarians to carry out their specialized tasks, facilitate the ability to teach, conduct research, and publish in appropriate academic journals. This will cause them to be at an equal level with colleagues in other disciplines the authorS argued. Based on these factors, it can be said that appropriate academic and professional qualifications are important factors that can facilitate the successful implementation of professional responsibilities.

## **3. Challenges Facing Law Librarians In Nigeria**

The Law Librarianship profession is plagued with several challenges especially in Nigeria. The challenges include but not limited to salary, remunerations of Law Librarians which is not commensurate with their degrees, improper placement of Law Librarians, double qualifications and single remuneration package, lack of training for Law Librarian among others. Noordin (2004) noted that many Law Librarians have lost interest in the profession due to salary remunerations that are not commensurate with their experience, workload and skill set. Hence, many persons are not interested in the Law Librarianship profession. Many are unable to sustain their interest in the profession due to ill-treatments emanating from the Faculty, University Librarians, and the institution as a whole and as a result they pick up other jobs. For example, a law lecturer in the Law Faculty who possesses LLB, BL, on a fresh appointment, is placed on the rank of Assistant Lecturer (CONUASS 2), and after completing his LLM degree, the lecturer is automatically upgraded to the rank of Lecturer II (CONUASS 3). However, a Law Librarian on a fresh appointment with an LLB, BL, MLS which is equivalent of the LLM is placed on the rank of an Assistant Librarian (Assistant Lecturer) or Librarian II (CONUASS 2). The lecturer in the Law Faculty only come to the class, teach and go back to his private practice, but a Law Librarian, is expected to be in the office from 8 am – 4 pm from Monday to Friday and January through December, teach the use of the library, legal methods, attends Faculty Board meetings and other statutory meetings, assist users to carry legal research among others. Anyaegbu and Obiozor-Ekeze (2013) lamented that the professional qualification of academic Law Librarians in Nigeria is so demanding and that by Council of Legal Education requirements, the Law Librarian should be a lawyer and a librarian. This involves a dual degree in law and librarianship. There is no University in Nigeria that offers a degree course in Law Librarianship. If one intends to be a Law Librarian not less than ten (10) years is required to acquire both degrees and that after acquiring the dual qualifications, the designation of Law Librarian is not spelled out in most Nigerian Universities Condition of Services. The big question is that the possession of the dual qualifications by the Law Librarian is at whose expense. This is a million-dollar question yet to be answered. Noordin (2004) further opined that university management as a matter of urgency should quickly, properly, and seriously addressed the issue of the Law Librarianship profession through the following means to overcome the rising shortage of Law Librarians and brain drain, the author stated. He said that there is the need to reconsider commensurate salary remuneration for Law Librarians to attract more qualified people to venture into this sector of Librarianship. Due recognition should be accorded the Law Librarianship profession by hiring only properly qualified personnel for such positions and; support and encourage professional development among Law Librarians to enhance professionalism and quality of librarianship.

#### 4. The Pains Of Law Librarians In Nigerian University Libraries

Over the years, Law Librarians have been in the pains of working with dual qualifications and only get paid with one qualification. The million-dollar question that is yet to be answered is: “What is the gain of Law Librarians for the possession of the dual qualifications to salvage the Law Faculty from de-accreditation? The under-listed are some of the pains of Law Librarians.

- i. Improper placement of Law Librarians on their first appointments: Law Librarians are not properly placed in line with their dual qualifications. For instance, to qualify as an Assistant Lecturer (CONUASS2) in the Law Faculty one needs to possess LL.B. with a minimum of 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Honours (Lower Division), plus B.L, whereas a Law Librarian with LLB, BL, MLS is placed on the same rank as an Assistant Lecturer (Assistant Librarian or Librarian 11 CONUASS 2). See the table below.

Table: I Qualification And Publication Requirements For Appointments And Promotions Of Law Lecturers

S/N	Post	Salary/Scale	Basic Education Requirement
1.	Graduate Assistant	CONUASS 1	NIL
2.	Assistant Lecturer	CONUASS 2	LL.B. with a minimum of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Honours (Lower Division), plus B.L.
3.	Lecturer II	CONUASS 3	LL.B. with a minimum of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class Honours (Lower Division), plus B.L. LL.M. with a minimum of one (1) publication.
4.	Lecturer I	CONUASS 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LL.B., LL.M., Ph.D. (in Law), B.L. with a minimum of three (3) publications (Fresh appointee)</li> <li>• Ph.D. (in Law), LL.M.B.L. with a minimum of two (2) publications (by conversion).</li> <li>• LL.M., B.L., LL.B. with a minimum of five (5) publications, three of which must be in print (fresh appointee) and with evidence of Ph.D. registration.</li> </ul>
5.	Senior Lecturer	CONUASS 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ph.D. (in Law), LL.M, B.L, with a minimum of eight (8) publications, six (6) of which must be in referred Law journals/books.</li> <li>• LL.M., B.L., L.B. with a minimum of eight (8) publications six (6) of which must be in print in referred Law journals/books, and not more than one (1) book shall be accepted.</li> </ul>
6.	Reader	CONUASS 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Ph.D. with at least 9 years of teaching experience at the university level or cognate exposure.</li> <li>• Ph.D. (in Law), LL.M, B.L, with a minimum of eighteen (18) publications, all in print, fourteen (14) journal articles must have been published in referred Law journals/books and four (4) of which must be in foreign indexed regularly published Law journals. Not more than two (2) books shall be accepted.</li> </ul>
7.	Professor	CONUASS 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LL.B., LL.M., Ph.D. (in Law), B.L. with a minimum of twenty-six (26) publications, all in print, twenty-three (23) of which must have been published in referred Law journals/books and six (6) in foreign indexed regularly published Law journals. Not more than three (3) books shall be accepted as part of publications.</li> </ul>

Adopted from Niger Delta University Conditions of Service 2015.

- ii. Promotion of Law Librarians is based on Library and Information Science degree/qualification. In other words, dual qualifications, single qualification for the promotion of Law Librarians. The Law Librarian is employed with dual qualifications in Law and Librarianship, however, in the promotion of Law Librarians in Nigerian Universities, it is only the Librarianship qualification that is used to promote Law Librarians. This is as result of the fact that most Universities do not have any promotion guidelines for Law Librarians in Nigeria. See the table below.

Table: II Qualification And Publication Requirements For Appointments And Promotions Of Library Academic Staff

S/N	Post	Salary/Scale	Basic Education Requirement
1.	Assistant Librarian (Graduate Assistant)	CONUASS 1	A good honours degree (2/2) in Librarianship from a recognized University plus one (1) year or exemption. The residence period for all library staff is three (3) years.
2.	Librarian II (Assistant Lecturer)	CONUASS 2	A good honours degree from a recognized University plus a professional qualification of Master's levels such as MIS, MLS, MLIS, or MA in Librarianship. Three (3) years' experience and must be eligible to be registered with the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN).
3.	Librarian I (Lecturer II)	CONUASS 3	M.L.S. or Masters in the relevant area plus two (2) journal publications. Computer literate and chartered Librarian i.e. registered by the LRCN.
4.	Senior Librarian (Lecturer I)	CONUASS 4	M.L.S. or Masters in the relevant area as in four (4) above plus three (3) journal publications computer literate plus LRCN registration.
5.	Principal Librarian (Senior Lecturer)	CONUASS 5	Professional degree as in three (3) above, same number of publications as that of a Senior Lecturer (8 publications) of which five (5) must be journal articles.
6.	Deputy Librarian (Reader)	CONUASS 6	Professional degree plus Ph.D. in relevant area; fifteen (15) publications twelve (12) in print, three (3) of which may be referred proceedings, and three (3) of which should be indifferent reputable foreign journals.
7.	University Librarian (Professor)	CONUASS 7	Professional degree and Ph.D. candidates must have spent at least six (6) years as Principal Librarian. In addition to books and journal articles, publications for Librarian staff include Bibliographic Essay, Bibliographies. Index to Books and Journal Guides to Literature; twenty (20) publications, fifteen (15) in a reputable refereed journal, five (5) of the publications must have appeared in at least regularly published Foreign Index Journals, International and Local Journals.

*Adopted from Niger Delta University Conditions of Service 2015.*

From the table above, references were never made to Law Librarians with double qualifications. The promotion of Law Librarians is purely based on professional Librarians requirements. With due respect, this practice is wrong and should be jettison.

- iii. Double qualifications single remuneration: The Law Librarian is employed with a Law degree and MLS in Librarianship. However, it is only the MLS degree that is used to remunerate and promote the Law Librarians. See the hereinbelow advert for the employment of Law Librarians:

*“Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the position below: Job Title Law: Librarian (CONUASS 2). Location: Kano: Requirements; applicants must possess LLB & BL with MLS/MILS from a recognized University. Experience; at least 3 years of cognate experience (HotNigeriaJobs.com 2019).”*

From the above advert, the Law Librarian is expected to possess LLB, BL which ordinarily or automatically qualifies the applicant on the rank of Assistant Lecturer (CONUASS 2), and MLS/MILS in librarianship. However, from the advert, despite the dual qualifications, the applicant will be placed on CONUASS 2, what then happened to the MLS/MILS the Law Librarian possesses? This is ridiculous. See the below advert for the employment of law lecturer:

*“Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates to fill the Academic position in the under-mentioned faculty and disciplines. Job Title: Assistant Lecturer (CONUASS 02) Location: Delta state. Requirements LLB&BL”*

- iv. Lack of motivation by university management
- v. Partial enforcement of the Council of Legal Education Policy on the library.
- vi. The strained relationship between the Law Librarians and the University Librarians.
- vii. Non-involvement of Law Librarians in the teaching of legal methods and legal research. The Council of Legal Education has stipulated that the Law Librarian as an academic staff of the faculty should be actively involved in the teaching of research methods, use of Law Library, and assist in conducting legal research. However, in most Law Faculty in Nigeria, the Law Librarian is not involved in the teaching of the course. In most Law Faculty, the Law Librarian is not carried along. He is only remembered during accreditation.
- viii. Non-invitation of Law Librarians to attend a Faculty Board meeting and other academic meetings. Most institutions' Law Faculty, the Law Librarian is never invited to attend a faculty board meeting and academic meetings.
- ix. Non-involvement of Law Librarians in the selection and acquisition of legal information resources: In most institutions, the Law Librarian will be in his office and received books from the Faculty which he does not know the sources of purchase without his input. He is directed to process and put them on the shelf
- x. Lack of monthly imprest for most Law Librarians to run the Law Library. Most institutions do not give their Law Librarians imprest to run their libraries.
- xi. Lack of training for Law Librarians: Most institutions have failed to sponsor their Law Librarians to attend the mandatory Council of Legal Education Law Librarians Annual Workshops. Most Law Librarians sponsor themselves to the workshop.

## **5. Special Salary Scale for Law Librarians**

Law Librarianship is a special profession that needs special attention. There is a need for Law Librarians to be placed on a special salary scale. It takes an average of five to seven years to acquire LLB, and BL in a Nigerian University and Nigerian Law School, and an average of two years to obtain MLS in Librarianship in Nigerian Universities. In all, to be qualified as a Law Librarian, you might have put in an average of eight to ten years. Anyaegbu, Obiozor-Ekeze (2013) rightly noted that no University in Nigeria offers a degree course in Law Librarianship. And if you intend to be a Law Librarian not less than ten (10) years is required to acquire both degrees and that after acquiring the dual qualifications, the designation of Law Librarian is not spelled out in most Nigerian Universities condition of services. Hence, there is the need for qualify Law Librarians to be placed on a special salary scale and payment of wardrobe allowance as a kind of incentives to Law Librarians.

The legal information professional cited by Olorunfemi (2016) stated that in America, there is a disparity in the salary of Law Librarians and other Professional Librarians. That even though salaries vary by experience and location in America, the average starting salary of Law Librarians is between \$45,000 and \$100,000. In Nigeria, the author further stated that there is no disparity in the salary of Law Librarians and other Professional Librarians. The salary for Law Librarians is as it applies to other Librarians in the Nigerian system. The question begging for an answer is, if there is no disparity between the salary of Law Librarians and other Professional Librarians in Nigerian Universities or if there is no special salary for the Law Librarians, what is the gain of the Law Librarian for acquiring double or dual qualifications to salvage the Law Faculty from de-accreditation? The author hereby proposes the hereinbelow career path and salary structure for Law Librarians in Nigerian University Libraries. See the table below:

Table: III Proposed Career Path And Salary Structure For Law Librarians In Nigeria University Library

S/N	Post	Salary/Scale	Basic Education Requirement
1.	Assistant Law Librarian (Graduate Assistant)	CONUASS 1	LLB, and Diploma in Librarianship.
2.	Law Librarian II (Assistant Lecturer)	CONUASS 2	LLB, BL PGD in librarianship
3.	Law Librarian I (Lecturer II)	CONUASS 3	LLB, BL and M.L.S. in Librarianship. Computer literate and chartered Librarian i.e., registered by the LRCN.
4.	Senior Law Librarian (Lecturer I)	CONUASS 4	LLB, BL, M.L.S. in Librarianship plus three (3) journal publications computer literate plus LRCN registration.
5.	Principal Librarian Law (Senior Lecturer)	CONUASS 5	LLB, BL, M.L.S. plus three (3) journal publications computer literate plus LRCN registration Professional degree as in three (3) above, same number of publications as that of a Senior Lecturer (8 publications) of which five (5) must be journal articles.
6.	Deputy Law Librarian (Reader)	CONUASS 6	LLB, BL, M.L.S. Ph.D. fifteen (15) publications twelve (12) in print, three (3) of which may be referred proceedings, and three (3) of which should be indifferent reputable foreign journals.
7.	University Librarian /University Law Librarian (Professor)	CONUASS 7	LLB, BL, M.L.S. Ph.D.; twenty-six (26) publications, fifteen (15) in a reputable refereed journal, five (5) of the publications must have appeared in at least regularly published Foreign Index Journals, International and Local Journals

#### 6. Suggestions For Improvement Of The Law Librarians In Nigeria Universities Welfare.

The Council of Legal Education, the regulator of Law Librarians in Nigeria University libraries should come up with a clear policy statement and address same to all Vice-Chancellors and Deans of Law Faculties in the Nigerian University in the following areas, and they should be strictly monitored by the Council for strict compliance. Law Librarians should be given the mandate to report any defaulting institutions to the Council of Legal Education for appropriate sanction.

- i. Law Librarians should be properly placed in line with their dual qualifications, with clear career progression in tandem with the policy statement of the Council of Legal Education.
- ii. There should be a separate promotion guideline for Law Librarians drawn from the promotion guideline of Law and Librarianship and/or adoption of the author's proposed career path and salary structure for Law Librarians in Nigerian University Libraries.
- iii. A qualified Law Librarian with dual qualifications on fresh appointments should be designated as Librarian I (CONUASS 3).
- iv. Law Librarians/Head of the Law Library should possess dual qualifications in law and librarianship as required by the Council of Legal Education.
- v. Qualified Law Librarians should be placed on special salary scale and other allowances, such as wardrobe allowance.
- vi. Law Librarians that possess the dual qualifications on the job should be given a level increase in salary remuneration and grade.
- vii. Law Librarians should be actively involved in the teaching of legal methods and legal research in tandem with Council of Legal Education policy statement.

- viii. Law Librarian should always be invited to attend Faculty Board meeting and other academic meetings in the Law Faculty.
- ix. Promotion of Law Librarians should be based on the dual qualifications'; library and information science and law degrees.
- x. Law Librarian should be involved in the selection of legal resources and the acquisition of legal resources to the library, in line with the policy statement of the Council of Legal Education.
- xi. Law Librarians should be given monthly imprest to run the Law Library in tandem with the policy statement of the Council of Legal Education.
- xii. Training of Law Librarians: Council of Legal Education Law should come up with a policy that any Institutions that fail to sponsor their Law Librarians to attend the mandatory Council of Legal Education Law Librarians Annual Workshops and other training should not be accredited.
- xiii. Law Librarians should be given scholarships, especially intending Law Librarians.
- xiv. There should be comprehensive enforcement of the Council of Legal Education library policy.

## 7. Conclusion

The article discussed the issue of dual qualifications of Law Librarians and the single remuneration, as well as the pains of Law Librarians in Nigerian University Libraries. The article identified some of the pains to include; improper placement of Law Librarians, double qualifications single remuneration system, lack of motivation by university management among others. The article also canvasses the need for Law Librarians to have a special salary scale and allowances. The article also makes some useful suggestions to improve the welfare of Law Librarians in Nigerian University Libraries to include (i) proper placement of Law Librarians in line with their career progression, (ii) provision of a special salary scale for Law Librarians, (iii) promotion of Law Librarians should be based on their dual qualifications instead of Librarianship qualification alone and (iv) Law Librarians should be involved in the teaching of Legal Method and Legal Research among others.

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