Part 3 - Vocational Component of Bar Training

3A: The Bar Training Course

This section includes information on the Bar Training Course, including entry requirements, an overview of the application process, the course providers, and key statistics.

Overview - entry requirements

1 Applicants for a place on a Bar Training Course must:

a. have completed the academic component of Bar training (see **Part 2** of this Bar Qualification Manual);

b. be a member of one of the **Inns of Court** (see **Part 5A** of this Bar Qualification Manual); and

c. be fluent in English.

2 Please note that AETOs may impose additional selection criteria over and above the minimum requirements specified above. Please check the website of individual AETOs for more information about their entry requirements.

English language requirement

3 The Professional Statement describes the following Competence regarding English language, which should be demonstrated by students before they enrol on a Bar Training Course.

The Professional Statement

Practical knowledge, skills and attributes

Barristers will:

1.8 Exercise good English language skills.

They will have an effective command of the language and be able to use it appropriately, accurately and fluently so as to handle complex and detailed argumentation. They will use correct English grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Barristers should:

- Use correct and appropriate vocabulary, English grammar, spelling and punctuation in all communications.
- Speak fluent English.

4 You must be able to demonstrate that your English language ability is at least equivalent to:

a minimum score of **7.5** in each section of the IELTS academic test, or

a minimum score of **73** in each part of the Pearson Test of English (academic).

5 On entry to a Bar Training Course, your AETO will require you to sign a statement that you are aware of the standard of English Language required, and that you consider that you have met it. If the AETO considers that any aspect of your language ability is not at the required level after you have commenced the course, your AETO must (as soon as the issue is identified) require you to:

take one of the language tests above; and

provide a test certificate certifying that you have achieved the required scores within 28 days.

6 Certificates issued by an English language test provider verifying the score achieved by a candidate in one of the above tests must be current and valid by reference to the rules of that English language test provider.

7 If you fail to provide evidence that you have achieved the required scores within **28 days** of being asked to do so, your AETO must require you to:

withdraw from the course; or

intermit and improve your score prior to being admitted to the Bar Training Course (subject to meeting any additional entry requirements) in a subsequent year.

Making an application

8 Information on how to apply for courses has been published on our website. For information about Authorised Education and Training Organisations who deliver the vocational component of the Bar Training Course, see our page on AETOs from 2020 .

Authorised Education and Training Organisation (AETO)

9 The following organisations have been authorised to deliver vocational Bar Training.

BPP University – to deliver:
the vocational component (in one part) of the three-step pathway;

the vocational component (in two parts) of the four-step pathway, and

the integrated academic and vocational components of the integrated pathway.

You can read more about BPP's authorisation **here** .

Cardiff University - to deliver the vocational component of Bar training.

You can read more about Cardiff's authorisation **here** .

Manchester Metropolitan University – to deliver:
the vocational component (in one part) of the three-step pathway.

You can read more about Manchester Metropolitan's authorisation **here** .

Northumbria University to deliver:
the vocational component (in one part) of the three-step pathway;

the vocational component (in two parts) of the four-step pathway, and

the integrated academic and vocational components of the integrated pathway.

You can read more about Northumbria University's authorisation **here** .

Nottingham Trent University – to deliver:
the vocational component (in one part) of the three-step pathway.

You can read more about Nottingham Trent University's authorisation **here** .

City St George's, University of London – to deliver:
the vocational component (in one part) of the three-step pathway; and

the vocational component (in two parts) of the four-step pathway.

You can read more about City St George's authorisation **here** .

The Inns of Court College of Advocacy - to deliver:
the vocational component (in two parts) of the four-step pathway.

You can read more about the Inns of Court College of Advocacy's authorisation **here** .

The University of Law – to deliver:
the vocational component (in one part) of the three-step pathway.

You can read more about The University of Law's authorisation **here** .

The University of the West of England (UWE) – to deliver:
the vocational component (in one part) of the three-step pathway; and

the vocational component (in two parts) of the four-step pathway.

You can read more about UWE's authorisation **here** .

The **University of Hertfordshire** has been authorised to deliver:
the vocational component (in one part) of the three-step pathway; and

the vocational component (in two parts) of the four-step pathway.

12 December 2023 - Please read our announcement about the University of Hertfordshire's authorisation here .

More details about the courses offered by these organisations, including how to apply, can be found on their websites.

Monitoring visit reports

10 As part of the annual monitoring programme of the BPTC, we carried out visits to BPTC providers.

11 The overall aim of the review process was to secure a high quality of educational and academic experience for students. Its most important function was to assess the quality and standards of provision of the BPTC, by considering the academic management, content, teaching, learning, assessment and support for the BPTC.

12 This was based on a risk management approach, with a lighter touch where there was confidence in a provider, but there were mechanisms for 'triggered' visits if and when causes for concern arose. The review process also provided a mechanism for quality enhancement and the identification and exchange of good practice.

Key statistics

13 The BPTC Key Statistics documen **t** contains data on the make-up and performance of BPTC students across all providers.

14 Previous key statistics reports are available on our website .

The syllabi

15 For the syllabi for the Bar Training Course, please see **Part 3B** of this Bar Qualification Manual.

3B: Bar Training Syllabi

This section includes links to download the course syllabi for the Bar Training Course.

1 The Bar Training syllabi documents are for use by Bar Training students and AETOs, and Bar Transfer Test candidates.

2026 syllabus:

Bar Training Criminal Litigation Syllabus 2026 (December 2025 - Blackstone's 2026 References Version) and **Tracked Changes version**

Bar Training Criminal Litigation Syllabus 2026 (10 December 2025) Summary of changes

(It should be noted that amendments to the examinable material set out in this syllabus may, where necessary, be issued at a later date to take account of implementation of the changes to the criminal justice system which were announced by the Ministry of Justice in December 2025. There will be no amendments before the April 2026 exam.)

2025-2026 syllabus:

Bar Training Civil Litigation Syllabus 2025 (June 2025 - White Book 2025 Version) and **Tracked Changes version**

Bar Training Civil Litigation Syllabus 2025 (30 June 2025) Summary of Changes

(Valid for December 2025, April 2026, and August 2026 assessments.)

2026-2027 syllabus:

Bar Training Civil Litigation Updated Syllabus 2026-2027 and **Updated Tracked Changes version**

Bar Training Civil Litigation Syllabus (24 June 2026) Summary of Changes

(Valid for December 2026, April 2027, and August 2027 assessments.)

2 If you have any questions about the syllabi documents, you should contact your AETO.

3C: Centralised assessments

This section includes information on the vocational component centralised assessments including what subjects are covered by the exams, what to do before the exams and on the day of sitting, marking and results, and the results review process.

Contact: Exams@barstandardsboard.org.uk

Overview

1 Vocational component centralised examinations are set on our behalf by the **Central Examination Board** (CEB). The CEB consists of a group of senior examiners, including experienced legal practitioners and academics. Psychometric and examination experts support the work of the CEB.

2 Centralised examinations were introduced to ensure consistency across course providers, and closer regulatory oversight of standards in knowledge subjects.

The following Bar Training subjects are centrally examined:

Civil Litigation and Evidence; and

Criminal Litigation, Evidence and Sentencing.

Exam	Duration	No of questions	Marking
Civil Litigation (paper 1)	2 hours	50 Multiple Choice questions (MCQs)	Electronically – by the BSB
Civil Litigation (paper 2)	2.5 hours	40 Multiple Choice questions (MCQs) including rolling case scenarios	Electronically – by the BSB
Criminal Litigation	3 hours	75 Multiple Choice questions (MCQs)	Electronically – by the BSB

About the Civil Litigation exam

The Civil Litigation exam is assessed in two parts and you are required to attempt both parts of the exam and meet the pass standard in order to be considered Competent. You cannot bank your result for part of the attempt.

The Civil Litigation (paper 1) examination is a closed book exam.

Bar Training Civil Litigation Paper Two is an open book examination. The materials you are permitted to use are:

A copy of the White Book, which can be highlighted and annotated

Sticky page markers, which can be used to mark sections of the White Book

Sticky notes with annotations in the White Book but may not interleave the pages with loose sheets or other material.

You are not permitted to use any additional loose material.

About the Criminal Litigation exam

The Criminal Litigation examination is a closed book exam. You are not permitted any material other than a writing utensil, if applicable.

Standard Setting

3 The standard for success is determined at each sitting based on the difficulty of the questions presented on the paper, using a criterion-referenced standard setting technique. The pass standard may differ between sittings, but the pass marks are translated and reported as 60% to AETO's.

Examination dates

4 All students attempting a centralised assessment, are expected to sit the exam on the same day and at the same time. AETOs may approach the BSB to request alternative start times in relation to candidates needing adjustments or other arrangements or those sitting their exams overseas (offered at AETO discretion).

2026 - Summer	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Monday 17 August 2026

Who to contact

5 Although we regulate AETOs by the end of September 2026 Bar Training Courses, there are their AETO to find out the specific dates on which the results will be released to them. The BSB cannot correspond with individual candidates about their results; all queries must be directed to the AETO.

6 Your AETO should be contacted about any queries relating to the following examination queries:

- Reasonable Adjustments
- Mitigating circumstances
- Overseas examinations
- Fit to sit queries
- Exam deferrals
- Mock examinations and revision materials
- Results release dates
- Clerical error checks
- Institutional policies and procedures relating to examinations

Please consult your AETO's website or your student advice centre for the relevant contact at your provider.

7 We are responsible for, and should be contacted about, the following examination queries:

- **Enhanced clerical error checks**
- **Enquiries for review**

Further information on Bar Training and contact points is available from our website on https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/becoming-a-barrister/bar-training-who-does-what.html.

Quality assurance of exam papers

8 Centralised examination questions are written by experienced legal practitioners and academics contracted by us. The examining team meets to scrutinise and approve each question. These comprise an agreed exam paper, which is then tested under exam conditions, and is further reviewed to assess the validity and currency of any referenced law. Exam papers also undergo scrutiny by our syllabus team to ensure all questions comply with the current curriculum. Any recommendations made during these processes are then passed on to the Chief Examiner responsible for the relevant subject who will advise of the changes to be implemented in the paper. Our staff implement any required changes before the paper is proof-read by a professional proof-reader.

9 Pass marks of the centralised examination papers are determined by the standard setting processing.

10 After completion of the quality assurance processes, the paper is ready to be printed and delivered to the AETO or uploaded on their computer-based testing platform where appropriate.

Sitting exams overseas

11 Some, but not all, AETOs allow candidates to sit written exams at overseas venues. This is offered at the AETO's discretion. It is the responsibility of the AETO to make the relevant arrangements with the venue, pending BSB approval. You should contact your AETO for further information.

Reasonable adjustments

12 If you require additional arrangements to sit the centralised examinations, you must contact your AETO. The AETO will liaise with us on your behalf if required.

Mock examination paper

13 We provide a centrally set mock exam paper for each of the centralised examinations. Mock exams are administered by AETOs and they will advise when the mock exam paper will be available.

Fit to sit

14 AETOs may operate a "fit to sit" policy. Some AETOs require candidates to complete a "fit to sit" form at the time of an exam. Other AETOs will complete this process at time of enrolment where candidates will declare that if they are present at the time of the exam, they are fit to sit the exam.

On the day

15 You are responsible for managing your time in a way that allows you to complete the exam within the time available.

2026 - Autumn	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Wednesday 19 August 2026 Thursday 10 December 2026
2027 - Spring	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Friday 24 April 2026 Tuesday 18 August 2026 Monday 26 April 2027 Tuesday 15 December 2026
2027 - Summer	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Wednesday 28 April 2027 Thursday 17 August 2027 Thursday 17 December 2026
2027 - Winter	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Friday 30 April 2027 Monday 29 November 2027
2028 - Spring	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Friday 20 August 2027 Wednesday 1 December 2027 Thursday 20 April 2028
2028 - Summer	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Friday 3 December 2027 Tuesday 25 April 2028 Monday 14 August 2028
2028 - Winter	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Thursday 20 April 2028 Wednesday 16 August 2028 Tuesday 5 December 2028
2029 - Spring	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Friday 18 August 2028 Monday 16 April 2029 Monday 7 December 2028
2029 - Summer	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Wednesday 18 April 2029 Monday 20 August 2029 Monday 11 December 2028

16 Only writing materials approved by the AETO may be used in the examination room. Students should contact their AETO for details of permitted materials.

17 For examinations being delivered in pen and paper format, candidates will be given:

an exam paper

an optical mark read (OMR) sheet on which to record answers.

Only answers given in the OMR sheet will be accepted and marked. It is essential that the instructions on completing the OMR sheet are followed correctly. It is your responsibility to ensure that the OMR sheet is correctly filled in and each answer choice is clearly marked.

18 All documents must be returned to the invigilator at the end of the exam.

Extenuating circumstances

19 Sometimes, extenuating circumstances may prevent you from sitting an exam or, if you do sit the exam, significantly impact your performance. AETOs handle extenuating circumstance applications. You should familiarise yourself with your AETO's policies and procedures so that you know what to do. The BSB cannot correspond with individual students about their extenuating circumstances.

Quality assurance of marking

20 Centralised examinations are marked by us. To ensure consistency and quality, a number of control processes are in place to ensure all materials are marked correctly.

Pen and paper delivery

After the exam, MCQ answer sheets are returned to us and scanned by an Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) machine which captures the answers selected by the candidate. This process removes the risk of errors associated with human input and enables accurate production of statistics and results analysis. Like with CBT delivery, we conduct the following checks when scanning:

Candidates' answers are cross checked against the attendance list and vice-versa to ensure we have received all the expected candidates' answers and identify unexpected candidates that were not included in the examination's attendance list.

Any queries are raised with the AETO and resolved prior the subject's exam board.

Quality assurance of results

21 Once the marking is completed, statistical data is generated and presented at examination boards.

22 There is one **Subject Exam Board** (Subject Board) per examination. The purpose of each Subject Board is to review and moderate the overall cohort results of the paper and to make recommendations to the **Final Exam Board** (Final Board). A Psychometrician attends all Boards; he reassures the Board of the accuracy of the statistical data presented and the examination's performance. An Independent Observer also attends all Boards; he provides assurance to the Board that due process was applied when considering the centralised assessments' results.

23 The Subject Board uses a number of information sources, including statistical data both past and present, Chief Examiners' and invigilators' reports, and feedback from AETOs.

24 The Subject Board considers the performance of questions and recommends either accepting the results or intervening. For details of previous interventions, please read the relevant **Chair's report** .

25 The Final Board considers the recommendations made by the Subject Boards and either agrees or amends them. We apply any agreed interventions and generate results per AETO. The process involves a series of manual and electronic checks to ensure that AETOs receive accurate results.

Results review process

26 Examination answers are not re-marked but you may request:

a clerical error check;

an enhanced clerical error check; and/or

a request for review

27 You may request a **clerical error check** if you believe that your marks have been captured incorrectly.

How to apply	Contact your AETO
Deadline	Applications must be received within **10** days of results release (date of despatch, not receipt).

2029 - Winter	Bar Training Criminal Litigation Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1) Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	Monday 10 December 2029 Friday 24 August 2029 Wednesday 12 December 2029 Friday 14 December 2029

Outcomes	The Candidate Review Process policy details possible outcomes of reviews.
Fee	Contact your AETO.

28 You may request an **enhanced clerical error check** if you believe there has been any error in the computation, scaling or transcription of marks by us that may have affected the outcome of an examination.

How to apply	Enhanced clerical checks may only be requested following an initial clerical error check. **Bar Training** candidates should apply through MyBar , by navigating to “My Bar Training” and then “Student Review”. If you are a continuing BPTC candidate (pre 2020) or a BTT candidate, you should email exams@barstandardsboard.org.uk and we will send you an Enhanced clerical error check application form.
Deadline	Applications must be received within **10** days of the result of the clerical error check.
Outcomes	An outcome will be communicated to you within **20** working days of receipt of the request or payment, whichever is later.
Fee	**£75** for the Criminal Litigation exam **£100** for the Civil Litigation exam The Fee is payable on submission of the application on MyBar . If you are a continuing **BPTC candidate (pre 2020)** or a **BTT candidate** submitting a paper application, the fee is payable on submission of application by telephoning the Exams team on **020 7611 1444** between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

29 The request for review challenges the decisions of the CEB. There is only one ground on which a request for review can be considered: breach of natural justice by the CEB. You should carefully consider whether you have the required evidence to challenge on this ground. You must consult the **Chair's report** to assist in the preparation of a submission. There is no further appeal process in place.

How to apply	Bar Training candidates should apply through MyBar by navigating to “My Bar Training” and then “Student Review.” If you are a continuing BPTC candidate or a BTT candidate: download, complete and return a request for review form to us.
Deadline	Applications must be received within **20** days of the Chair's Report being published.
Outcomes	The Results Review Process policy details possible outcomes of reviews.
Fee	**£250** per subject, paid on submission of application on MyBar . If you are a continuing BPTC candidate or a BTT candidate submitting a paper application, you can pay by telephoning our Exams Team on **020 7611 1444** between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

30 Payment for the review processes undertaken by us must be submitted at the same time as your request. If your payment is declined, we will contact you to rectify the matter and a second payment attempt will be made. Should the second attempt be declined, your review application will be deemed void and therefore rejected.

Chair’s report

31 To ensure the transparency of the centralised examinations, the Chair of the Centralised Examinations Board publishes a report for each examination cycle, detailing statistical data for each sit and interventions applied. Reports are published for examinations in Civil Litigation and Criminal Litigation (taken during the vocational component of Bar training) and for the Professional Ethics examination (taken during pupillage). The reports are one element of a range of qualitative and quantitative data that we use to oversee the provision of Bar training. The Chair’s reports are factual. We will take an annual report on the operation of Bar training to the Board in December of each year which will include a more reflective overview by the Chair and where we will further reflect beyond the centralised assessments on the wider operation of Bar training during the year.

32 Request for Review applicants are advised to carefully read the data contained in the Chair's Report before making an application. Current reports are available below. Previous Chair's reports are available on request from our Exams Team.

Chair's Report part 1 (to be read in conjunction with part 2 for the specific sit)

April 2026 Chair's Report part 2

33 Previous Chair's reports are available on request to our Exams Team.

Future requirements

If you have not yet completed the BPTC, you will have the opportunity to complete the course as normal, with three attempts at each assessment.

Spring 2021

If, after Spring 2021, you have extenuating circumstances which means you have to defer sitting one of the centralised assessments, then you may be affected by the **transitional arrangements** which we have put in place for centralised assessments.

We have published a statement which sets out what the transitional arrangements will be for centralised assessments on our website. If you are a current BPTC student, you should read this statement to find out how you may be affected.

BPTC Candidates - Future requirements

If you have not yet completed the BPTC, please consult the transitional arrangements for centralised assessments on our website.

3D: Exemptions and waivers (vocational)

This section includes information on exemptions and waivers from the vocational component of Bar training.

Overview

1 Bar Training Courses under a number of different titles were introduced from September 2020. Details of these courses may be found on our website.

2 Bar Training Courses must be undertaken in their entirety. There are no partial waivers of these courses for prior learning or experience gained before starting the vocational component. However, you may be granted exemption from a Bar Training Course if you have qualified in another jurisdiction, or as a solicitor in England and Wales. This type of exemption will usually be conditional on passing sections of the Bar Transfer Test (see **Part 7D** of this Bar Qualification Manual).

3 The rules regarding exemption from any of the individual components of Bar training are set out in the BSB Handbook at **Rules Q7-Q12** .

4 More information for qualified lawyers who wish to transfer to the Bar of England and Wales can be found in **Part 7** of this Bar Qualification Manual.

5 More information on exemptions relating to the academic component of Bar training can be found in **Part 2E** of this Bar Qualification Manual.