

**REGULATORY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT**

**AUTHORISATIONS TEAM**

**CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ACADEMIC STANDING**

These Notes are divided into two sections:

**A. Guidance Notes – General Procedure for applications and appeals**

**B. Criteria for applications**

***On the basis of academic qualifications***, and/or

***On the basis of alternative qualifications and/or experience***

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| ***Nature of Application*** | ***Brief Summary*** |
| **Certificates of Academic Standing** | This covers applications by students who do not hold an undergraduate law degree awarded in England and Wales, who wish to undertake the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) for completion of the academic component of training. Applications may be made based on:   1. academic qualifications (para B3); or 2. alternative qualifications and/or experience (para B4) |

**A. Guidance Notes – General Procedure for applications and appeals**

**1 General**

* 1. In these Notes, the Bar Standards Board and its staff are referred to as the “the BSB”. The BSB Handbook is referred to as “the Handbook”.
  2. These Notes which the BSB applies in considering applications and should be read carefully and alongside the Handbook.

1. **Application Process**
   1. Applications must be made on the appropriate application form. Please return the completed application form with accompanying documentation and payment of the application fee to [authorisations@barstandardsboard.org.uk](mailto:authorisations@barstandardsboard.org.uk). If you are unable to submit your application by email, please contact us for further guidance.
   2. All applications contain a declaration that the applicant has read, understood, and complied with these Criteria and Guidelines.
   3. The declaration must be completed with a hand-written signature. If you have no access to scan and print the application form - please write out the declaration from the application form by hand, sign it, take a photo of the document and email that to us as evidence of your handwritten signature.
   4. Applications are considered and determined under the powers of the Bar Standards Board. The Bar Standards Board has delegated to BSB staff the ability to take decisions within the criteria and guidelines set out in this document.
   5. The BSB will consider all the circumstances of the application and will apply the guidelines set out in these Notes.
   6. All applications will be acknowledged in writing within seven days of receipt of the complete application form.
   7. Please see our [Service Update page](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/how-we-regulate/the-decisions-we-take/authorisations-decisions/authorisations-team-service-update.html) for information and updates for all proposed or pending applications.
2. **Application Fee Payment**
   1. The application fees for each type of application and methods of payment are listed on the BSB [website](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/how-we-regulate/the-decisions-we-take/authorisations-decisions/authorisations-team-service-update/general-information-and-faqs.html). The preferred method of payment is **bank transfer** (BACS), the details for which are on our [website](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/how-we-regulate/the-decisions-we-take/authorisations-decisions/authorisations-team-service-update/general-information-and-faqs.html).

If you are unable to pay by BACS, you may make payment by **credit/debit card**. Once you have received an email acknowledgement that your application has been logged, please call the Authorisations Team on 020 7611 1444 to make a card payment.

Details of the **Fee Waiver Policy** are available on the BSB website.

1. **Supporting Evidence**
   1. An applicant must ensure that all supporting evidence is sent with the application form. **We will accept copies of academic transcripts or professional confirmations emailed directly from the awarding body/regulator. If you are unable to provide documents by this method, please submit scans of your personal copies**. We may contact the awarding body/regulator of any scanned documents provided directly by you to verify their content.
   2. An application will not be treated as “complete” until the application form, required supporting documentation and application fee have been received. The BSB may request further information or documentation be supplied in support of an application, but it is the primary responsibility of the applicant to provide all relevant information and supporting evidence.

Applicants should exercise judgement when selecting supporting evidence and only provide documentation that is relevant to the criteria.

It is usually **not** appropriate to supply examples of work with an application; however, if provided, please ensure that references to third parties (eg clients) are suitably redacted so as to ensure anonymity. Any application that is supported by unredacted material will be returned to the applicant.

* 1. The BSB will treat all applications and any supporting documentation provided in the strictest confidence.

**Online Resources**

In the first instance, please view our online resources.

BSB website: [www.barstandardsboard.org.uk](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk)

Applications forms and guidance notes: [www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/qualifying-as-a-barrister/current-requirements/forms-and-guidelines/applications-authorisations,-exemptions,-waivers-and-reviews/](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/qualifying-as-a-barrister/current-requirements/forms-and-guidelines/applications-authorisations,-exemptions,-waivers-and-reviews/)

Authorisation Team Service Update Page: [www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/how-we-regulate/the-decisions-we-take/authorisations-decisions/authorisations-team-service-update.html](http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/how-we-regulate/the-decisions-we-take/authorisations-decisions/authorisations-team-service-update.html)

For further information, please contact the Authorisations Team on [authorisations@barstandardsboard.org.uk](mailto:authorisations@barstandardsboard.org.uk) or 020 7611 1444

**B. Criteria for applications**

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| **Certificates of Academic Standing** | |
| **1.** | **Introduction** |
| 1.1 Applicants intending to complete the academic component of training for the Bar by means of a Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL), who do not hold an undergraduate degree awarded in England and Wales, must obtain a Certificate of Academic Standing from the Bar Standards Board.  1.2 An application for a Certificate of Academic Standing may be made either before, or after, commencing a GDL. Applicants undertaking the GDL for these purposes will not be able to progress to the vocational component of training for the Bar until a Certificate of Academic Standing has been awarded by the Bar Standards Board (BSB).  1.3 A Certificate of Academic Standing issued by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) is not acceptable for the Bar, a separate application must be submitted to the BSB. | |
| **2.** | **Supporting Documents** |
| ***Transcripts***  2.1 Currently dated official transcripts must be provided for all qualifications listed on the application form. Transcripts must show:   * The applicant’s full name * The final overall classification/overall mark of the qualification. Where a classification is shown, a key must be included showing the actual mark or mark ranges. * The date of award * All subjects taken within the qualification * The number of attempts at each subject * All marks and/or credits obtained in all years of study. Where an alphanumeric grading system is used, a key must be included showing the actual marks, or mark ranges, represented by the grades shown on the transcript.   ***Certificates***  2.2 If the official transcripts do not give the date of award and final overall classification/level of the qualification concerned, a certified copy of the qualification certificate(s) must be provided. A certified copy is a copy that is verified as a true copy by a UK Notary Public. If you are unable to access a UK Notary Public, a certified copy may be provided by a qualified legal practitioner from your home jurisdiction, the awarding institution, or the appropriate Government Ministry. Any other form of certification is not acceptable. You must not submit any original qualification certificates.  ***Translations***  2.3 If a certificate or transcript is in a language other than English, an English translation must be provided. This must be undertaken by a UK Notary Public, the awarding institution, the British Council, or the appropriate Embassy. Translations undertaken by a commercial translation service are not acceptable. In addition, a further copy of the original documents in their primary language must be submitted.  ***Evidence of name change***  2.4 If, for any reason, the names you have entered on your application form differ from those given on your degree transcripts and/or other supporting evidence, appropriate evidence of the change(s) must be enclosed with your application. Photocopies of this documentation must be certified copies (ie certified as true copies by a UK Notary Public, or a qualified legal practitioner from your home jurisdiction). | |
| **3.** | **Certificate of Academic Standingbased on *academic qualifications*** |
| ***Undergraduate qualifications***  3.1 A Certificate of Academic Standing based on academic qualifications will only be granted in the following circumstances:  3.1.1 when the applicant has attained a qualification(s) that has been determined to be at least equivalent to British Bachelor (Honours) degree standard; and  3.1.2 where the award of that qualification(s) is at a standard at least equivalent to a lower second-class Honours degree conferred in England and Wales.  3.2 A Certificate of Academic Standing based on academic qualificationswill not be granted when the applicant’s qualification(s) is determined to be equivalent to British Bachelor (Ordinary) degree standard, or lower.  ***Postgraduate qualifications***  3.3 Applications based on postgraduate qualification(s) (eg Masters degrees) will be assessed according to the following criteria:  3.3.1 The status of the postgraduate qualification(s): the qualification must be awarded by a recognised UK university, or a non-UK university regarded by ECCTIS as a recognised Higher Education Institution (HEI).  3.3.2 The level of the postgraduate qualification(s): the qualification must be regarded by ECCTIS as being of a level at least equivalent to a British Bachelor (Honours) degree.  3.3.3 Performance on the postgraduate course. The qualification must be such as to provide evidence of academic achievement significantly higher than a bare ‘Pass’ (eg recognition through the award of a degree with ‘Merit’ or ‘Distinction’).  ***Overseas dental/medical/veterinary degrees***  3.4 These degrees will normally meet the Bar’s minimum entry requirement if they are accepted by the relevant professional regulatory body for practice in the UK. Official evidence of this **must** be provided from the appropriate UK professional regulatory body (eg the General Dental Council, the General Medical Council, and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons). | |
| **4.** | **Certificate of Academic Standingbased on *alternative qualifications and/or experience*** |
| 4.1 The Bar Standards Board may, exceptionally, allow applicants who do not hold an undergraduate law degree awarded in England and Wales to undertake a Graduate Diploma in Law course for completion of the academic component of training. It may do so where it is satisfied that an applicant has demonstrated those competences of the Bar Standards Board’s Professional Statement[[1]](#footnote-1) for barristers that are ordinarily demonstrated through possession of an undergraduate law degree (for example, the ability to apply effective analytical and evaluative skills). An applicant must be able to evidence in their application how they achieved the relevant competences, with examples from their qualifications and/or experience.  4.2 To determine whether an applicant meets the requirements of para 4.1, the Bar Standards Board will consider:   * academic and/or vocational qualifications of the applicant which do not meet the requirements of para 3.1, but nevertheless demonstrate the required competences. * achievements of the applicant within an academic, professional, business, or administrative field that demonstrate the acquisition of the required competences. | |

1. <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/the-professional-statement.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)