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Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) course specification requirements and guidance, September 2015

The BPTC course specification requirements and guidance was published in September 2015 for use in the Academic Year 2015-16. This document sets out corrections, changes and clarifications that have been made since the date of publication

7 January 2016

1. Typographical error

The Civil Litigation syllabus at section 11 on Default Judgment and Summary Judgment, there is an incorrect reference to Practice Directions. The final bullet point currently reads PD 24 paragraphs 1-7 and 9-10. **This should read PD 24 paragraphs 1-6 and 8-10.**

3 December 2015

1. Typographical error

Please note that in the Criminal Litigation syllabus at section 24 Custodial Sentences, the first bullet point of the curriculum contains an error that reads 'E2.1-2.1 and 2.5'. This sentence in full should read: "The relevant material is addressed in paragraphs **E2.1-2.2** and **E2.5** of Blackstone's Criminal Practice 2015".

2. Change to regulation on maximum time limit for completion of BPTC

Part B Academic Regulations 4.10.1

The existing regulation reads:

When a full-time candidate commences the BPTC in September of a specific academic year their anticipated completion date is within that academic year. For these purposes an academic year comprises the cycle of first sit assessments and referred or deferred assessments immediately following the first sit assessments. Even in cases where there are documented and accepted extenuating circumstances, the course must be completed within a maximum of two years of the expected completion date. For the part-time students, the course must be completed within a maximum of three years of the expected completion date.

By way of example, a full-time candidate who commences in September 2015 would normally complete the course by 31 August 2016. This includes provision for any necessary re-sits. For this candidate the two-

year time limit would therefore be two years after the end of the 2015/16 cycle, i.e. 31 August 2018. The time limit for a part-time candidate who commences in September 2015 will normally complete the BPTC course by 31 August 2017. For this Part-time candidate, the time limit including provision for any necessary re-sits would therefore be three years after the end of the 2015/16 cycle, i.e. 31 August 2020

This is replaced with the following regulation with immediate effect for all students commencing the course in Academic Year 2015/16:

When a full-time candidate commences the BPTC in September of a specific academic year their anticipated completion date is within that academic year. For a part-time candidate, their anticipated completion date is the following academic year. For these purposes an academic year comprises the cycle of first sit assessments and referred or deferred assessments immediately following the first sit assessments. For both full and part-time students, the course must normally be completed within a maximum of three years of the expected completion date. The maximum time limit exists to avoid BPTC graduates proceeding to pupillage with “stale” knowledge.

For either full-time or part-time students who have documented mitigating circumstances that have been accepted through their Provider’s usual mitigating circumstances procedures, and who are still within the maximum number of sits permitted by the BSB, the maximum time limit may be exceeded at the discretion of the BSB to the next available sit only. Application to the BSB to extend the maximum time limit should be made by the course provider submitting evidence of the mitigating circumstances process and decision as soon as that process is complete.

3. Clarification on the use of Blackstone’s Criminal Practice in relation to the Criminal Litigation Syllabus

The Criminal Litigation Syllabus was set with reference to Blackstone’s Criminal Practice 2015, before the publication of Blackstone’s Criminal Practice 2016. The following clarifications are intended to assist in navigating between the two editions.

As a matter of general principle Blackstone's 2016 (BCP 2016) should take precedence over Blackstone's 2015 (BCP 2015) in the event of inconsistency between the old and new editions.

The paragraphs of BCP 2015 set out below have been omitted from BCP 2016.

Paragraph of BCP 2015	Clarification
D5.20	no longer in syllabus
F12.6	this remains in a slimmed down version as F12.6 in the new edition. It remains in the syllabus as per the

slimmed down version (concerning the important topic of what is “reprehensible behaviour”)

- F12.27 this paragraph has been deleted but is now dealt with in the new edition at **F12.3**. It remains in the syllabus.
- D23.18 no longer in syllabus
- D16.36 dealing with “Statements Tendered at Committal” in the 2015 edition now deals more generally with “Written Statements in Criminal Proceedings”. **D16.36**, and the first paragraph of **D16.37** of BCP 2016 will be in the syllabus.

Hearsay Evidence (section 14 of the syllabus)

The hearsay sections have been significantly re-ordered or rewritten. The examinable material is now addressed in the following paragraphs of BCP 2016.

For general principles: **F15.1-2, F15.6, F15.9, F15.10, F15.14-19, F15.21 and F15.23.**

For exceptions, gateways to admissibility and safeguards in the 2003 Act the position is mostly unchanged from the 2015 edition but for the avoidance of doubt, see as follows of the 2016 edition: **F16.1-4, F16.8 (section 116 only), F16.9-10, F16.12-13, F16.14 (first sub- paragraph only), F16.16 (first sub- paragraph only), F16.19-20, F16.24-25, F16.32 (first sub- paragraph only), F16.33-34, F16.36, F16.38-39, F16.41, F16.46-48, F16.54-58, F16.66, F16.72, F16.76-77, F16.84, F16.90-93.**

Character Evidence (section 15 of the syllabus)

For section 15, final bullet point, namely evidence of good character and good character directions, see now BCP 2016 at **F13.1-11, F13.16.**

Regarding bad character applications (syllabus part 15): where there is currently reference to Part 35 and R-237 of the supplement this should now be reference to **Part 21 and R-191 to R-196.**

F14.5 (syllabus part 15) has been removed. The content of F14.5 from the 2015 edition will no longer be on the syllabus. This paragraph related to background matters in any event.

END