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A. ACADEMIC COMPONENT

Completion of the academic component will provide students with the required legal knowledge and understanding of the law of England and Wales.

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A1. Foundations of Legal Knowledge

This section includes information on the foundations of legal knowledge subjects, the pass mark for these subjects, the maximum number of attempts at each subject and what happens in the event of a marginal failure or deemed pass in these subjects.

Overview

- 1 The seven foundations of legal knowledge are:
 - Criminal Law;
 - Equity and Trusts;
 - Law of the European Union;
 - Obligations 1 (Contract);
 - Obligations 2 (Tort);
 - Property/Land Law; and
 - Public Law (Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and Human Rights Law).

Future requirements...

Subject to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union and/or any agreement made on European Law in future, European Law will continue as one of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects for the foreseeable future.

The pass mark, marginal failure and deemed passes

- 2 All foundations of legal knowledge subjects must be passed at **40%** or above. If a course provider has a pass mark below 40%, it must ensure that students who are intending to qualify as barristers are aware that they must obtain at least 40% in each of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects.
- 3 A course provider may compensate or condone a single marginal failure in one of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects where the following requirements are satisfied:
 - i) The course provider's assessment regulations permit condonation and/or compensation; and
 - ii) There are exceptional circumstances in the student's case that are likely to have impacted on the student's performance; and

- iii) The mark attained by the student in the subject to be condoned or compensated is not less than 35%; and
 - iv) There is evidence of the student's academic strength across their course studies.
- 4 A student who fails one of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects that is not condoned must pass that subject at the course provider which awarded their law degree, or pass the relevant subject in the GDL, within a maximum of **three** attempts. This is subject to the student's law degree being awarded at lower second class honours (2:2) or above. Any student completing a subject within the GDL for this purpose must obtain a **Certificate of Partial Exemption** from the BSB (see **Part 2A (A5)** of the [Bar Qualification Manual](#)).
- 5 A course provider may, if permitted by its assessment regulations, deem a student to have passed one or more of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects that they failed or did not take due to a substantial cause beyond their control (including illness or bereavement). If this results in the student being awarded a law degree without a classification (e.g. an Aegrotat degree), they will need to apply for the **exercise of discretion** (see **Part 2A (A2)** of the [Bar Qualification Manual](#)).

Maximum number of attempts

- 6 The maximum number of attempts permitted for any of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects is normally **three**. Where all three attempts have been exhausted (within a law degree, the GDL, or a combination of the two) the academic component can only be satisfied by completing a full law degree or GDL programme afresh. In exceptional circumstances, a course provider may allow additional attempts at foundations of legal knowledge subjects.
- 7 Where one of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects is taught and assessed as two separate units (e.g. Criminal Law I and Criminal Law II), students are permitted three attempts at each unit, rather than collectively for the whole subject.

Future requirements...

As the BSB and the SRA are taking divergent approaches to qualification as barristers and solicitors, the [Joint Statement](#) will cease to apply to either profession in the future. There is more information about these changes - and what they mean if you want to become either a barrister or a solicitor - in the **Common Protocol on the Academic Component of training** (see Part 2A (A7) of the [Bar Qualification Manual](#)), which we have published jointly with the SRA.

In order to become a barrister, the requirement to complete the academic component of Bar training will not change. Depending on which of the approved pathways is offered by an Authorised Education and Training Organisation (AETO), this component may be integrated with the vocational component, rather than taken sequentially.

For those wishing to qualify as barristers, the current requirements will remain in force for QLD/GDL courses that start in (or before) the **2018/19** academic year and will last until students on those courses complete their studies.

2019/20 Academic Year

- The SRA will continue to administer the academic component of education and training for solicitors and barristers on behalf of both regulators.
- The concept of a QLD for the purpose of Bar training will no longer apply to law degree courses starting in (or after) the 2019/20 academic year.
- The Bar will remain a graduate-only profession, with a minimum classification of lower second class honours (2:2). Students who do not meet the minimum standard must apply to the BSB for the **exercise of discretion**.
- Students will be required to obtain a UK degree, awarded at Level 6 (or above) of the 'Framework for Higher Education Qualifications', by a recognised degree-awarding body. If this is a law degree, it must be compliant with the QAA benchmark statement for law. If the degree is in another subject, students must complete the GDL.
- Students who do not obtain a UK degree of the required standard must verify the equivalence of their qualifications or experience by obtaining a **Certificate of Academic Standing** from the BSB.
- Acceptable UK law degrees and GDL courses must cover the foundations of legal knowledge subjects and the skills associated with graduate legal work (e.g. legal research).

2020/21 Academic Year

- The SRA will continue to administer the academic component of education and training for solicitors only.
- The concept of a QLD for the purpose of Bar training will no longer apply to vocational component courses starting in (or after) the 2020/21 academic year.

2021/22 Academic Year

- The SRA will cease to be involved in the approval or recognition of new QLD/CPE courses that start in or after the 2021/22 academic year, following the introduction of the **Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE)**.
- Subject to further detail from the SRA in due course, we intend to allow some equivalence for part-qualified solicitors. For example, we expect that passing the SQE Stage One (which incorporates knowledge of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects) should be sufficient as an equivalent to the academic component of Bar training. This, we think, should aid students in deciding what law programme to attend, meaning that they could postpone decisions on their eventual career intentions.