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.

Contact: Authorisations Team

A4. Certificates of Academic Standing - Applications

This section includes information on Certificates of Academic Standing issued by the BSB, including when and how to apply for a Certificate.

Overview

1. Students with degrees from outside the UK/Republic of Ireland who wish to undertake the GDL must apply to the BSB for a Certificate of Academic Standing.

2. Students with UK/Republic of Ireland postgraduate degrees where no UK undergraduate degree is held must also apply for a Certificate of Academic Standing. Students who hold UK medical, dental or veterinary degrees should contact the BSB’s Authorisations Team for further advice.

3. Students who do not hold any degree qualifications may apply for a Certificate of Academic Standing based on considerable experience or exceptional ability in an academic, professional, business, or administrative field.

4. The BSB will issue a Certificate of Academic Standing if it is satisfied that the qualifications held and/or experience gained by the student are equivalent to a UK honours degree of at least lower second class (2:2).

5. The BSB refers to the general comparability statements prepared by UK NARIC when assessing overseas degree qualifications. UK NARIC is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. It performs this official function on behalf of the UK Government.

6. A Certificate of Academic Standing issued by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) does not certify eligibility to undertake the GDL for the purpose of qualification as a barrister.

- Certificate of Academic Standing – Application Form
- Certificate of Academic Standing – Application Guidelines
**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 will no longer apply to Bar training for 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). It will be the responsibility of Authorised Education and Training Organisations (AETOs) to ensure compliance with these arrangements.

**2020/21 Academic Year**

- The SRA will continue to administer the academic component of education and training for solicitors only.

**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.