

**BAR  
STANDARDS  
BOARD**

REGULATING BARRISTERS

**Sitting the centralised assessments on the Bar Professional Training Course  
and Bar Transfer Test in August 2020**

**CANDIDATES' GUIDE TO PEARSON VUE EXAMS**

**Version 1**

**June 2020**

**This document may be updated before the exams in August. Please do not rely on a downloaded or printed version. Always refer to our website for an up-to-date version.**

## FOREWORD

Following the postponement of the April 2020 sitting and due to the ongoing international response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the August 2020 centralised assessments on the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and Bar Transfer Test (BTT) will be computer-based examinations. This will allow you to sit the exams safely in August 2020 and allows us to comply with any local lockdown restrictions and social-distancing measures which might be in place at the time of the exams.

We understand that many of you will be feeling anxious about the prospect of taking important professional examinations in such unfamiliar circumstances. This guide aims to give you an idea of what to expect and to answer any questions you may have about sitting computer-based exams.

We want you to be assured that the tried-and-tested arrangements we have put in place with Pearson VUE for the August 2020 assessments will be as accessible as possible to you as candidates. We hope this guide helps in this regard.

As far as possible in the circumstances, the arrangements will replicate the invigilation protocols in traditional exam-hall settings with which you will be familiar. This is important because it protects the robustness of the assessments you are going to take and means that everyone who will rely on the fact that you have successfully passed your BPTC or BTT – such as other barristers and the public who will use the services you might provide as a future barrister – will know that you have been assessed to as high a standard, and by as robust a process, as those in previous years.

After reading this guide, we hope you will have a better understanding of the arrangements we have put in place for your exams and that this will enable you to progress to the next stage of Bar training or other study/employment as planned in the autumn. Whilst recognising that you will be taking these exams under different conditions to those which you are used to, we hope this guide will help you to prepare for these centralised assessments.

We wish you well in your exams.

The Bar Standards Board

Many of the arrangements described in this guide do not apply to the small number of students whose needs cannot be met by a computer-based solution as their arrangements will be bespoke and tailored to individual needs. Separate discussions will be had with these students.

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## **1: Before the date of your exams**

### **1.1 Confirming arrangements for your exams**

#### **1.1.1 The August BPTC and BTT examinations**

The August 2020 centralised assessments on the BPTC and BTT will be computer-based examinations to be held on the following dates:

- Professional Ethics: 11, 12, 13 and 14 August
- Civil Litigation: 17 and 18 August
- Criminal Litigation: 20 and 21 August

It has been agreed that there will be a global **increase of 15 minutes** to the duration of the Ethics exam (so this is now two hours and 45 minutes long) to allow for some additional time to take into account concerns about typing speed caused by the computer-based delivery. The additional 15 minutes is also granted to students who have already been permitted additional time as part of their learning agreements ie they will have two hours and 45 minutes before any other adjustments are added. The civil and criminal litigation exams are three hours long.

In a communication to be sent from your provider, you will be given instructions on how to arrange a slot for taking your exam with Pearson VUE. Subject to availability, you can book to take your exam on any of the scheduled dates for each subject. Slots will be available at a range of times on the dates listed above.

Measures will be in place to ensure there is no possibility of collusion between students sitting the exams on different dates. For obvious reasons, we will not be publishing details of these measures.

The computer-based exams will be delivered either using Pearson VUE's OnVUE secure global online proctoring solution or at one of Pearson VUE's global network of test centres. This will enable you to sit your exams in a number of locations around the world in August and in accordance with any local lockdown restrictions and social-distancing measures which might be in place at the time of the exams, as well as in accordance with a method of delivery that suits you.

#### **1.1.2 How you will sit your exams**

We expect that many students will wish to sit their exams remotely from home via OnVUE, a solution which uses a combination of artificial intelligence and live monitoring to ensure your exam is robustly guarded by professional human proctors located elsewhere.

The online proctors will perform a similar role to that performed by invigilators in traditional exam-hall settings. OnVUE also deploys sophisticated security features such as face-matching technology, ID verification, session monitoring, browser lockdown and recordings.

Whilst these may well be the first exams you have sat remotely in this way, online proctoring is widely used for tests and examinations throughout the world (especially during this time of global health emergency).

Where you have agreed with your BPTC or BTT provider that your personal circumstances will need an adjustment to be made to how you sit your exams (see 1.1.3 below), you will, if you prefer, be able to attend one of Pearson VUE's global network of physical test centres. This will be subject to local health and safety guidance and prevailing restrictions at the time of the exams. If you sit your exam in a test centre, it is important to note that your exam will still be a computer-based examination although being physically present in a test centre does enable us to make some adjustments, such as permitting breaks, which are not possible if you sit the exam remotely. If your needs cannot be accommodated in a Pearson VUE test centre, we will work with your BPTC or BTT provider to consider what alternative arrangements might be possible. There will also be capacity in test centres for many of those who would simply prefer to use a test centre even if they do not have a specific need to do so, but priority will be given to those who have had specific needs identified and such places will be subject to availability.

OnVUE remote proctoring is not available in the following countries: China, Cuba, Iran, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Sudan and Syria. Pearson VUE test centres are, however, available in China, Japan and South Korea subject to local pandemic guidance and availability. On-screen instructions and any remote communication with Pearson VUE proctors are only available in English.

### **1.1.3 Reasonable adjustments**

If you have an existing learning agreement which allows reasonable adjustments during the provision of your BPTC or BTT course and/or your examinations, then your provider should already have been in touch with you to discuss how your needs can best be met, whether that means you sit the exams remotely or at a physical test centre.

If you do not have an existing learning agreement, your BPTC or BTT provider should also already have been in touch with you to discuss reasons why you might require adjustments due to the exams now being computer-based. Again, this could mean you sit the exams remotely or at a physical test centre.

Your provider will advise you whether the adjustments deemed necessary to meet your needs can be delivered remotely via OnVUE or at a test centre. You will be given instructions by your provider on how to arrange a slot for taking your exam with Pearson VUE – either remotely or at a test centre.

**If you will be taking your exam in a test centre, you will have priority over other students as long as you follow the instructions from your provider about how and when to arrange your exam slots.**

#### **1.1.4 Students not requiring reasonable adjustments**

If you do not require adjustments to be made, we expect that you will probably want to take your exams remotely via OnVUE. However, subject to availability, you may also be able to book slots to take your exams in a test centre. Please bear in mind that students with specific reasons to need to take their exams in test centres will be given priority initially for such slots.

Whether you will be taking your exams remotely or in a test centre, you will still need to book a precise time slot for taking your exam with Pearson VUE. Slots will be available at different times of the day, so this may help you to sit an exam at a time which fits with your personal circumstances. Subject to availability, you can book to take your exam on any of the scheduled dates for each subject.

The longer you leave it to book a slot, the more your choice of time slot – whether that be online or at a test centre – will be restricted as slots will only be bookable on a strictly “first come, first served” basis for students not specifically requiring adjustments. When booking opens, you will initially only be able to book slots for remotely proctored exams. This is because students requiring agreed adjustments will be given priority slots in test centres. Online booking for exams in test centres will be opened to all candidates on **Wednesday 15 July**.

#### **1.1.5 Not sitting the exams in August**

If we or your provider are unable to meet a request for an adjustment and/or if you decide not to sit your exam in August for any reason – even if that is nothing to do with adjustments – then you may opt in advance not to sit your exam this summer. If you opt to do this, you will not suffer the usual penalty of losing one of your permitted sittings to pass the centralised assessments.

If you decide you cannot, or do not want to, sit one or more centralised assessments in August, please notify your provider in writing. Please specify which of the centralised assessments you will not be sitting.

The next available opportunity to sit the centralised assessments will be in December 2020. At this stage, we are unable to confirm whether the December sit, or any future sits, will be traditional in-person exams or need the same arrangements as the sit in August. This is due to the uncertain nature of the response to the ongoing global health emergency.

If you do not sit one or all of your exams in August, you should be aware that due to the planned changes to the vocational component of Bar training, there are only a limited number of remaining opportunities for you to take your assessments in their current format. Please read our information about transitional arrangements on our website at:

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/becoming-a-barrister/transitional-arrangements.html>.

This includes information about the dates of future sittings after December 2020.

## **1.2 Preparing to take your exams via OnVUE**

### **1.2.1 System requirements**

In order to take your assessments remotely with the online proctoring functionality provided by OnVUE, you will need access to a computer with the following system requirements:

- Either Windows 10, Windows 8.1 (32-bit or 64-bit), Windows 7 SP1 (32-bit or 64-bit) or Mac OS X 10.10 or above.
- RAM — minimum specified for the operating system|4GB or more.
- Display — minimum resolution of 1024x768 in 16-bitcolor.
- Working webcam (minimum 640 x 480 resolution @ 10 fps) and microphone.
- Internet connection of at least 1 Mbps for both the upload and download bandwidth. It is highly recommended that this be a hardwired connection (not wireless) especially for those with a slower Internet connection.

If you do not have a system which meets the above requirements and you cannot borrow one – either by setting one up in your home (eg using a friend’s laptop) or, subject to local social-distancing rules, taking your assessments in a house or other location which does have the required system (eg using a desktop computer at somebody else’s house) – then you should arrange to book slots to take your exams in a test centre.

### 1.2.2 Booking your exam through Pearson VUE

When booking opens, if instructions from your provider indicate that you need to make your own booking, you should do this through Pearson VUE's website. Please follow the instructions you are given, because if you require certain adjustments the process may be slightly different.

Online booking for remotely proctored exams will open on **Wednesday 1 July** and will close on **Wednesday 29 July**.

Online booking for exams in test centres will open on **Wednesday 15 July** (thus giving priority access to those students with an agreed need to take their exams in a test centre) and will close on **Wednesday 29 July**.

We recommend you book your slots as soon as possible especially as time slots are bookable on a strictly "first come, first served" basis.

Booking is available online at: <https://home.pearsonvue.com/bsb>

Click on the "Sign In" box and then use the username and password which you used when you took your Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT) with Pearson VUE. If you cannot remember your username or password, follow the onscreen instructions to request a reminder email.

Separate instructions will be provided for BTT candidates who have not previously registered with Pearson VUE due to not having taken a BCAT.

Once signed in, you will be taken to your Dashboard. Click the arrow to the right of "Do you have a private access code?" and a text box will appear to prompt you to enter a Private Access Code (PAC).

You will receive two different PACs for each exam, one for online proctored exams and one for test centre exams. **Your PACs will be sent to you by your BPTC or BTT provider via email.** If you wish to sit an online proctored exam, enter the online proctored PAC. If you wish to sit your exam at a test centre, enter the test centre PAC. Test centre PACs will not be accepted until booking for test centres is opened to all candidates.

Once you have entered your PAC, you will be asked to provide a few additional details. This includes the need to provide a telephone number on which you may be contacted by your online proctor during your exam in the event of a loss of internet connection.

You must also accept various policies, including a facial comparison policy agreeing to the use of artificial intelligence (AI) identification techniques, before you can complete a booking for your online proctored exams.

Booking will require you to agree to Pearson VUE's privacy statement at <https://home.pearsonvue.com/privacy>. Pearson VUE is an American company and they store data in the US, but the company maintains certification for, and



complies with, the EU-US Privacy Shield Framework and so meets GDPR requirements.

Remote proctoring involves processing special category data – including using facial comparison technology and automatic processing of data. All data is encrypted while held in storage by, or in transit, from Pearson VUE. Pearson VUE systems comply with GDPR.

Data collected to verify your identity are not retained by Pearson VUE for very long – for candidates in the UK or EU, your ID documents will be deleted straight away, your photos deleted within 30 days, and your video images deleted within 24 hours. **OnVUE cannot and will not access the files stored on your computer.**

You can only book one examination at a time, (Professional Ethics, Civil Litigation or Criminal Litigation) so you will have to repeat the process described above for each examination you are taking.

Please note also that you will require a form of photo identification on the day of your exam. **Ideally, this would be in the form of a passport or driver's licence (with photocard). Other forms of government-issued photo identification document may be used but these may take longer to be verified on the day of your exam.** Your student ID is **not** an acceptable form of identification. Your ID must be valid at the time of your exam, so please check that your document does not expire before the date of your last online exam.

If you have changed your name since you took your BCAT and therefore the name on your identification document does not match the name on your Pearson VUE account, please contact Pearson VUE Customer Services to get your BCAT account updated. If you do not do this, you will not be able to take your exam.

If you have a reason other than a name change why the name on your identification document does not match the name on your Pearson VUE account, please email the BSB at [exams@barstandardsboard.org.uk](mailto:exams@barstandardsboard.org.uk) so that we may assist you. In this situation, you will need to take your exam in a test centre.

If you encounter any difficulties when booking your exam slots please contact Pearson VUE: <https://home.pearsonvue.com/bsb/contact>

### **1.2.3 Checking your setup with a system test**

**IN ADVANCE OF THE DAY OF YOUR FIRST EXAM**, please run a simulated exam. You can access the test via this link:

<https://home.pearsonvue.com/bsb/onvue>

This is an essential step as it allows the system to verify that your setup (such as your internet connection speed, microphone, speakers and webcam) is correctly configured and that it will be able to verify your identity correctly on the day of your exam and to run the online proctored system correctly. The further in advance that you can run this test the better, as it will give you time to rectify any issues. The process involves downloading the OnVUE software and installing it on the computer that you will use on the day of your exams.

We recommend running the simulated test more than once. You should run the test on the same device that you will use to take your actual exams and with the same internet connection. We also recommend you run the test in the same room and at the same time of day that you will take your exams. This will enable you to replicate, as far as possible, the conditions at the date and time of your actual exams.

When running the simulated test, you will be prompted to take images of yourself, your ID and your working space. You can use either a smart phone or your webcam to take these images and to submit them.

As well as running a simulated test, we strongly recommend that you visit <http://vue.com/athena/athena.asp> where you will find computer-based demo test software which provides the opportunity for you to learn how to navigate your way through computer-based examinations. This will enable you to familiarise yourself with the user interface ahead of your actual exams. For example, you will be able to see where you will be required to enter your answers to the exam questions and how to use the “interactive whiteboard/scratchpad” area within the software. (The latter is provided in lieu of not being permitted to use a pen and paper to write notes during your online proctored exam.) When viewing the demo test, please be aware that because the civil and criminal litigation exams contain multiple choice questions, all the questions will be like the first exam type question in the demo – “Multiple Choice Item – Single select”. As the Professional Ethics exam is an essay-based assessment, the example in the demo is the fifth type of question you will see – “Essay item”. You will not be required to answer any of the other types of question shown in the demo.

### **1.2.4 Setting up the room where you will take your exams**

Where possible, and where necessary, you should also prepare your room in advance of the day of your first exam. You will need to do this whenever you run a simulated test (See 1.2.3 above).

OnVUE follows a standardised online proctored test admissions and administration process. Before the scheduled examination time, you will need to ensure the following, so doing some of this in advance of the day will help you feel more relaxed about these matters on the day itself:

- set up in a room so other people cannot enter when you are taking your exam. (See some suggested tips for ensuring this in section 1.2.5 below.);
- remove or erase written materials from walls to prepare for the room scan during check-in. Wall art and posters may be inspected and additional monitors and screens need to be unplugged and turned away;
- verify that there is sufficient lighting in the room without windows or other light sources immediately behind you as this will cause you to appear as a silhouette and mean it may not be possible to verify your identity; and
- clear material from your desk or other surfaces in the room. (See section 2.1.3 below for more on this including some images of a compliant room.)

### **1.2.5 Making sure you will not be disturbed**

Whilst we cannot know everything about your individual circumstances, the following **suggestions** about what to prepare in advance **might** help reduce the chances of you being disturbed during your exam. (Please see also section 2.1.4 below for peace of mind about what your online proctor might do should you be disturbed from an extraneous source on the day.)

- make sure that everyone you live with knows that you will be sitting an online examination and ask them to keep quiet so as not to disturb you, and especially not to enter your room;
- subject to any social-distancing rules which might be in place locally when you sit your exam, make whatever childcare arrangements that you would have put in place had you been sitting the exams in a traditional exam-hall setting;
- subject to any social-distancing rules which might be in place locally when you sit your exam, arrange for somebody else to look after any noisy pets such as dogs;
- inform neighbours that you will be sitting an exam and ask them politely to keep any noise to a minimum;
- inform any potential visitors to your house that you will be sitting an exam and ask them not to call on you during your exams;
- make sure that anyone likely to call you on the phone you are using for emergency contact during your exam knows that you will be in an exam and not to call, text or message you during the appropriate times;

- place “Quiet Please / Do Not Disturb: Online Examination In Progress” signs outside your room and/or house (for example, next to the doorbell so that nobody rings it – you could even leave a sign instructing any deliveries to be left on the doorstep or with a neighbour);
- unplug your landline telephone and switch the mobile phone that you are using in case of needing to be contacted by a proctor to silent;
- turn off or remove any electrical or other devices which might make a sound during your exam (such as alarm clocks or radios); and
- manually deactivate any distracting notifications on the computer you will be using (including pop up calendar notifications).

We recommend you keep all windows and doors closed during your exam to reduce the impact from outside noises.

If you are worried about your internet connection, you may also want to ask the people you are living with not to use same connection that you will be using for your online exam to reduce the risk of them using up bandwidth.

### 1.3 Preparing to take your exams at a physical test centre

Exams to be taken in a Pearson VUE test centre must be booked in advance. The process for booking test centre slots is the same as that for booking remotely proctored exams and is described in detail in section 1.2.2 above. When booking opens, if instructions from your provider indicate that you need to make your own booking, you should do this through Pearson VUE’s website. Please follow the instructions you are given, because if you require certain adjustments the process may be slightly different to that described in 1.2.2.

Online booking for exams in test centres will open on **Wednesday 15 July** and close on **Wednesday 29 July**.

Your exam will still be a computer-based examination and you will be provided with a fully configured computer at your test centre. Please note that whilst you will use the same user interface to complete your exam as those sitting their exam remotely, your sitting will NOT be overseen by an online proctor because invigilators will be physically present throughout your exam at the test centre.

In order to familiarise yourself with the candidate interface, before the day of your exam we strongly recommend that you visit <http://vue.com/athena/athena.asp> where you will find computer-based demo test software which provides the opportunity for you to learn how to navigate your way through computer-based examinations.

This will enable you to familiarise yourself with the user interface ahead of your actual exams. For example, you will be able to see where you will be required to enter your answers to the exam questions and how to use the “interactive whiteboard/scratchboard” area within the software. When viewing the demo test, please be aware that because the civil and criminal litigation exams contain multiple choice questions, all the questions will be like the first exam type question in the demo – “Multiple Choice Item – Single select”. As the Professional Ethics exam is an essay-based assessment, the example in the demo is the fifth type of question you will see – “Essay item”. You will not be required to answer any of the other types of question shown in the demo.

Please make sure you arrive 15-30 minutes before your exam starts so that you can check-in and have your ID verified. Before the day of your exam, we strongly recommend you know exactly how you will travel to the test centre especially if public transport options are likely to be restricted due to local COVID-19 “lockdown” / social-distancing measures. Please check Pearson VUE’s information regarding COVID-19 regularly as this contains important information about measures which might be in place at your test centre to limit the spread of the virus. This is available online at:

<https://home.pearsonvue.com/coronavirus-update>

If, as part of your “reasonable adjustment” agreement with your provider you have agreed IN ADVANCE that your exam will incorporate **scheduled breaks** in a test centre, you will be notified separately about when and for how long such breaks will occur. Time taken for a scheduled break **will be added** to the overall running time of your exam. You will be able to resume your exam after the break **but you will not be able to change any of the responses you entered before the break so you should review and finalise the answers you have entered before the scheduled break.**

If necessary, you will be permitted to take **unscheduled breaks** during your exam in a test centre. To do this, simply raise your hand to notify the invigilator as you would in any in-person exam. If you take an unscheduled break during your exam, **no additional time** will be added to the overall running time of your exam and the clock will continue to run when you take your break, just as it would in an exam hall under normal circumstances. You will be able to edit your answers and carry on where you left off after an unscheduled break.

For a comprehensive list of items such as medicine, inhalers, medical and mobility devices which you are allowed to have with you in a test centre, please visit <https://home.pearsonvue.com/Test-takers/Accommodations/Pearson-VUE-Comfort-Aid-List-PDF.aspx>. Having items with you which do not appear on this list will need to be agreed in advance of your exams taking place.

Eating and drinking at a test centre is only permitted if agreed in advance as a separate room will need to be booked.

Please note also that you will require photo identification on the day of your exam. **This can be in the form of a passport, driver's licence (with photocard) or any other form of government-issued photo identification document.** Your student ID is not an acceptable form of identification. Your ID must be valid at the time of your exam, so please check that your document does not expire before the date of your last exam.

If you have changed your name since you took your BCAT exam and therefore the name on your identification document does not match the name on your Pearson VUE account, please contact Pearson VUE Customer Services to get your BCAT account updated. If you do not do this, you will not be able to take your exam.

If you have a reason other than a name change why the name on your identification document does not match the name on your Pearson VUE account, please email the BSB at [exams@barstandardsboard.org.uk](mailto:exams@barstandardsboard.org.uk) so that we may assist you. In this situation, you will need to take your exam in a test centre.

## **2: On the day of an exam**

### **2.1 Taking your exam via OnVUE**

#### **2.1.1 If you are unwell and/or cannot take your exam**

If you are unwell and/or cannot take your exam, please contact your BPTC or BTT provider as soon as possible. You must also cancel your booking slot on the Pearson VUE website.

Your exam will be deferred to the next available opportunity in December. Due to the unprecedented circumstances caused by COVID-19, you will not be penalised by losing one of the permitted opportunities to pass your exam(s). We recommend that you also refer to your provider's protocols on mitigating circumstances as these are likely to have changed as well due to COVID-19. For more information on not sitting your exams in August, please refer to section 1.1.5 above.

#### **2.1.2 Getting ready for your exam**

Make sure that your room meets the conditions necessary for remote proctoring by:

- setting up in a room so other people cannot enter when you are taking your exam;
- remove or erase written materials from walls to prepare for the room scan during check-in. Wall art and posters will be inspected and additional monitors and screens need to be unplugged and turned away;
- verify that there is sufficient lighting in the room; and
- clear material from your desk or other surfaces in the room. (See section 2.1.3 below for more on this including some images of a compliant room.)

You are not permitted to have any food with you in the room. Drinks are allowed.

You are not permitted to have any pens or paper near you during your exam – see section 2.1.4 below about the whiteboard/scratchboard functionality built into OnVUE where you can make notes in lieu of this.

Books on shelves are permitted as long as they are out of arms reach. Please remove the following publications from your bookshelf: The White Book, Blackstone's and the BSB Handbook.

Headsets and headphones are not permitted to be worn during your exam.



For a comprehensive list of items which you ARE allowed to have with you whilst you sit your exams such as medicine, inhalers, medical and mobility devices, please visit <https://home.pearsonvue.com/Test-takers/Accommodations/Pearson-VUE-Comfort-Aid-List-PDF.aspx>.

You will need to take photos of your room to show that it meets the requirements listed above and you will need a device on which you can send these photos to Pearson VUE during your “check-in”. You can use either a smart phone or your webcam to take and submit these images. If you use a phone, it will then need to be kept **OUT OF REACH** but switched on for the duration of your exam so that your proctor can contact you if there is a loss of internet connection or other outage. Please be sure to switch your phone to silent and turn off all notifications apart from being able to receive a phone call.

Make sure that you have your photo identification as you will need these when you check-in for your exam. You will need to take images of these too.

Prepare yourself for not being able to leave the room for the duration of your exam for example by going to the toilet as close to the start of the exam as possible.

Turn on your computer and log in to your account.

You should start the “check-in” process (see 2.1.3 below) **up to 30 minutes before your allocated exam time.**

Your available exam time only starts once you have successfully completed “check-in”.

**If you begin the “check-in” process more than 15 minutes late, you will not be able to take your exam and will be marked as a “No Show”.**

### **2.1.3 Exam “check-in”**

After you click “Begin Exam”, the check-in process will start.

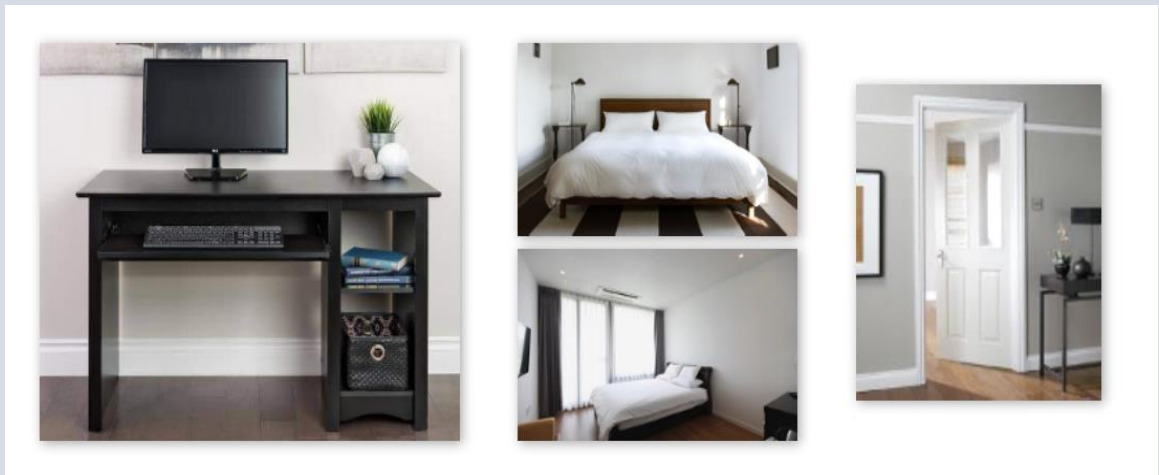
You will be led through a series of automated checks and steps that prompt you to:

- copy the unique exam access code for the exam you are sitting – this will appear automatically when you start your exam. This will then enable you to download the software containing your actual exam paper;
- confirm the phone number on which you may be contacted by a remote proctor in the event of a loss of connection during your exam (or select a checkbox to indicate that no mobile phone is available for the exam);
- test your microphone, webcam, and audio;



- capture an image of your head and shoulders for comparison with your photo ID and to confirm that nobody else is taking the exam for you;
- capture a photo image of your identification document (including your photo on the document);
- take and send four photos of your testing room workspace to show that you have complied correctly with the working room set-up requirements; and
- shut down other applications running on your computer.

Here are examples of the types of images which you will need to take to show that your room meets the requirements needed to take your exam.



The software will use artificial intelligence (AI) techniques to perform enhanced ID authentication and a face-to-ID-photo comparison. A human Pearson VUE “greeter” checks the room images.

If validation indicates that there are no issues to rectify, the self-check-in is successful and you will be permitted to launch the exam. A secure browser runs automatically before the exam is launched.

If there is a problem with any of the above, a Pearson VUE “greeter” will speak to you and help you to check-in and rectify any issues. You may be added to a queue before you can speak to a greeter. Please be patient and remember that your exam does not start until you have completed the check-in. Pearson VUE have informed us that the average time to wait for a greeter is under five minutes but in exceptional circumstances, you may have to wait for up to 15 minutes.

If you are not contacted by a greeter within this timeframe, check first that your internet connection is still working. As a last resort, you can contact Pearson VUE at <https://home.pearsonvue.com/bsb/contact>

A greeter will contact you by online chat, phone, or - if needed - Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and will perform additional check-in procedures only for those that did not pass during the automated check-in. If any of your validation steps failed, greeters will check your name, ID, ID expiration date and verify that your photo matches the photo in your government-issued ID document and your image in the live webcam feed. If applicable, they will perform check-in procedures to verify that your testing area is clear and that all non-essential software has been shut down. When the greeter is satisfied that all check-in requirements have been met and the workspace is clear, you will be directed to launch the exam.

#### **2.1.4 During your exam / about remote proctoring**

Once you have launched the exam, a proctor will actively observe you in real-time during your exam session. He or she will do this continuously throughout your exam. Try not to worry about this because they are only looking out for abnormalities and this is no different to what an invigilator does in a traditional exam-hall setting.

If necessary, the proctor will note any abnormalities and other testing-related incidents using session events in the OnVUE system.

If necessary, proctors will communicate with you during your exam. So as not to disturb you too much, they will do this first via the online chat forum but if you do not respond to them in the chat forum, they may contact you using OnVUE's voice functionality (VoIP). Proctors will only make contact if something unexpected occurs such as if there is an outage, or if you appear to have violated the examination rules due to possible misconduct or a security breach. **Most students will not need to have any contact with an online proctor.**

If a noise is detected during your exam which is outside of your control, such as a dog barking or the doorbell ringing your session will not be automatically terminated nor will it necessarily lead to an intervention by your proctor if, for example, it is obviously the isolated sound of a dog barking. However, if a loud noise persists and it is preventing the proctor from listening out for other noises which might indicate misconduct – for example, someone else talking to you – the proctor will need to contact you about the outside noise.

If, despite your requests in advance to housemates or family members not to do so, someone enters your room during your exam, the proctor would not automatically end the exam (unless you get up and leave the room). You would be expected to ask the person to leave the room but if you continue to talk to someone then you would first be warned to stop. Your session would only be terminated if you do not comply with your proctor's instructions.

**Only a live proctor can terminate a session and this will only happen if there has been a clear infringement of the rules.**

As in any exam, you should remain silent throughout your session unless you are speaking to your proctor.

Proctors are trained to differentiate between when someone is looking around naturally and when, for example, they might be repeatedly referring to a note or a similarly prohibited aid. If you are looking around naturally, they will not intervene. If you have a disability which means that you are prone to sudden head or shoulder or neck movements, simply mention this to your proctor when your exam starts so that he or she can disregard any such movements during your exam.

If you experience a technical or other issue during your exam, you can use the chat function to discuss the problem with your proctor and if necessary, agree a remedy. You do not need to wait to be contacted by a proctor before communicating with them.

If the internet connection is lost, you should try to reconnect immediately and relaunch your exam. If a proctor sees that there is a black video on their screen, they will try to chat with you. If you do not answer, the proctor will try to contact you via VOIP and then on the phone number you entered during check-in. If the proctor cannot reach you in any of these ways, they will revoke your exam. It is recognised that it might take several minutes for you to reconnect to the internet, for example if you have to restart a router.

Time is neither lost nor added to your exam when you are disconnected from the internet - your exam will resume where you left off.

Incidents such as loss of connection will be noted on the event log of your exam which in turn will be made available to us and your provider.

Apart from during a loss of connection, any other time that you spend communicating with a proctor will not be added onto the overall time window available to you to complete your exam. This replicates what would happen if you had to communicate with an invigilator during a traditional in-person exam.

If you are a BPTC student, the on-screen interface where you will record your answers may be familiar to you, because it is exactly the same interface used for the Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT).

The interface includes an area for you to enter in your responses to the exam questions. You do not need to worry about “formatting” your work because as with a written exam, you are not being assessed on your presentation skills. If you wish, the interface does though allow you to use simple formatting tools such as bold, underline and italics. You should use dashes in lieu of not being able to add bullet points. Visit <http://vue.com/athena/athena.asp> to see the user interfaces you will experience during your exam.

The system automatically saves what you enter so there is no need for you to save manually or for you to worry about losing what you enter.

There is also a whiteboard/scratchpad feature which allows you to type in any notes to yourself to help you with your responses. This is in lieu of not being permitted to have pens or paper near you when taking your exam. The whiteboard/scratchpad is in a separate window. What you type here will not be kept once your exam has finished, so as with “notes” in a physical exam, will not be assessed as part of your response to the exam questions.

A countdown timer will show you how much time is remaining in your exam. If you want to finish the exam before the available time has elapsed, you may do so by clicking the “End Exam” button. Do not worry about clicking this accidentally as a prompt will ask you if you are sure you want to leave before your exam session is terminated.

### **2.1.5 When your exam finishes**

Once you have completed your responses, if you have left sufficient time, you will be able to review your answers before finishing your exam.

If you have not finished your exam before the time is up, your OnVUE session will freeze and you will no longer be able to type anything. Everything will be automatically submitted.

To restore your computer’s browsers and other features which were locked during your exam, simply log out of OnVUE.

If you are worried about anything which happened during your exam such as a technical problem or an interaction with a proctor, please refer to Section 3.1 of this guide for advice on what to do.

## **2.2 Taking your exam at a physical test centre**

### **2.2.1 Before your exam starts**

If you are unwell and/or cannot take your exam, please contact your BPTC or BTT provider as soon as possible. You must also cancel your booking slot on the Pearson VUE website. Your exam will be deferred to the next available opportunity in December.

**If you are due to take the exam and you develop coronavirus symptoms do NOT travel to your test centre.**

Please make sure you arrive 15-30 minutes before your exam starts so that you can check-in and have your ID verified.

You will need to bring your photo ID documentation with you to the exam (see section 1.3). This will be checked during registration. Before your exam starts, you will be required to store your phone and any other prohibited electrical devices as well as any bags etc in a locker.

You will be provided with a copy of the exam rules with which you will be asked to confirm your agreement before being allowed to start the exam.

### **2.2.2 Taking the exam**

Your exam will be a computer-based examination. You will be shown to a desk with a computer. It will be set up for you, but you will not be able to see the exam questions until the exam begins.

Your computer will be running the same user interface as those sitting their exam remotely. This is where you will record your answers to the exam questions. There will be no remote proctoring taking place as an exam invigilator will be present in the room throughout your exam.

If you are a BPTC student, the on-screen interface where you will record your answers may be familiar to you, because it is exactly the same interface used for the Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT).

The interface includes an area for you to enter in your responses to the exam questions. You do not need to worry about “formatting” your work because as with a written exam, you are not being assessed on your presentation skills. If you wish, the interface does though allow you to use simple formatting tools such as bold, underline and italics. You should use dashes in lieu of not being able to add bullet points. Visit <http://vue.com/athena/athena.asp> to see the user interfaces you will experience during your exam.

The system automatically saves what you enter so there is no need for you to save manually or for you to worry about losing what you enter.

There is also a whiteboard/scratchboard feature which allows you to type in any notes to yourself to help you with your responses. The whiteboard/scratchboard is in a separate window. What you type here will not be kept once your exam has finished, so as with “notes” in a traditional exam, it will not be assessed as part of your response to the exam questions.

You will be provided with an erasable note board and pen before starting your exam.

You must remain silent during your exam and if other candidates are present in the same room, you must not speak to them at any time. Depending on where in the world you are taking your exam, you may be the only candidate in the room. There may also be candidates taking shorter exams than you who may leave the room before you.

If an invigilator finds that you have infringed the examination rules, he or she may ask you to leave the room and your exam will be terminated.

If, as part of your reasonable adjustment agreement with your provider you have agreed **in advance** that your exam will incorporate **scheduled breaks** in a test centre, you will have been notified separately in advance about when, and for how long, such breaks will occur. When the time arrives for your break, the invigilator will inform you and pause the exam. Time taken for a scheduled break **will be added** to the overall running time of your exam. You will be able to resume your exam after the break **but you will not be able to change any of the responses you entered before the break so you should review and finalise the answers you have entered before the scheduled break.**

If necessary, you may take **unscheduled breaks** during your exam. To do this, simply raise your hand to notify the invigilator as you would in any in-person exam. If you take an unscheduled break during your exam, **no additional time** will be added to the overall running time of your exam.

If you want to leave the exam early, you may do so by raising your hand and informing the invigilator.

Once you have completed your responses, if you have left sufficient time, you will be able to review your answers before finishing your exam.

If you have not finished your exam before the time is up, your session will freeze and you will no longer be able to type anything. Everything will be automatically submitted.

### **3: After your exams**

#### **3.1 If there was a technical or other issue during your exam**

If there was a technical issue during your exam, such as a loss of internet connection, this will be recorded on a factual technical report by Pearson VUE.

A Pearson VUE remote proctor or test centre invigilator may record in a factual report any interaction that has taken place with candidates.

If you are concerned that a technical or other issue may have adversely affected your performance in your exam, please let your BPTC or BTT provider know as soon as possible – ideally immediately after your exam has finished and certainly within 24 hours of your exam finishing, providing as much detail as possible as to the nature of the issue. **Please do not delay in any way or wait until you have got your results before reporting any issues.** There is a very limited window in which the BSB may have access to materials relating to the running of the exam. This is due to data protection laws.

Technical issues that have caused the exam to terminate may be considered as mitigating circumstances by your provider.

In the rare event of a proctor terminating an exam because of a major breach of the rules, we may request to review the video of the incident and advise your provider of the matter. This would then be considered through their academic misconduct processes. Please note that a human proctor will always contact you during your exam and speak to you in the first instance if he or she has any concerns.

Due to the nature of the arrangements for the August sitting, we have agreed the following protocols for dealing with these types of issues during these exams:

- if you experienced a technical or significant other issue and have failed your exam, you will be allowed to defer to the next sit in December without suffering the usual penalty of losing one of your permitted sittings to pass the exam you have failed; and
- if you experienced a technical or significant other issue but have done enough to pass your exam, you may either let the pass stand, or relinquish the pass and defer to the December sit. If you relinquish your August pass and fail in December, you will not be allowed to resurrect the original pass. This preserves the principle of not being allowed to retake an exam for the purposes of improving a mark, but also means that you are not disadvantaged as a result of a technical issue.



### **3.2 Getting your results**

Results for the Criminal Litigation and Civil Litigation assessments will be available from your provider on Friday 9 October 2020. Results for Professional Ethics will be available from your provider on Friday 6 November.

This means that if you are due to start a pupillage in October, you should only be awaiting your Professional Ethics result by the time you start your pupillage. As final overall BPTC and BTT results will only be issued once all results – including those set and marked by your provider – are confirmed in November, we have waived the usual requirement that only those who have been confirmed as having successfully passed a BPTC or BTT may start the non-practising period of pupillage. See section 3.3 below for more about this.

If you need to resit any of the centralised assessments, we have scheduled a new BPTC and BTT exam sitting in December 2020. At this stage, we are unable to confirm whether the December sit will be traditional in-person exams or need the same arrangements as the sit in August. This is due to the uncertain nature of the response to the ongoing global health emergency.

### **3.3 Call to the Bar and progression to pupillage in 2020**

This section is for you if you are sitting your centralised assessments in August and due to start a pupillage in the autumn.

Given the exceptional circumstances and the fact that neither you nor your pupillage provider will know your final BPTC result when your pupillage is due to start, we have waived the usual requirement that only those who have been confirmed as having successfully passed a BPTC may start the non-practising period of pupillage. (You should only be awaiting your Professional Ethics result by the time you start your pupillage – see section 3.2 above.)

We are encouraging pupillage providers to allow people to progress as planned to pupillage pending the release of the final BPTC results in early November and have provided guidance to them and to you on the factors to consider when taking that decision. You can read this guidance and some FAQs about your progression to pupillage at <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/becoming-a-barrister/pupillage-component/covid-19-and-pupillage-faqs.html>

The requirement to complete vocational training (ie to have passed all the elements of your BPTC or BTT) and be Called to the Bar will remain in order to commence the practising period of pupillage.