Part 5 - The Role of the Inns of Court

5A: Membership of an Inn of Court and student conduct

This section includes information on joining an Inn of Court, contact details for the Inns, Fit and Proper Person checks, student conduct, and support for pupils.

Bar Qualification Rules

BSB Handbook

Rule Q3 To be called to the Bar by an Inn an individual must have successfully completed the following:

.1 academic legal training;

.2 vocational training;

.3 the number of qualifying sessions as a student member of an Inn as prescribed from time to time by the BSB; and

.4 pay such fee or fees as may be prescribed.

Rule Q6 The BSB shall set out in writing:

.1 the requirements to be met by an Inn in admitting student members and calling individuals to the Bar;

.2 the manner in which an Inn shall assess whether such individuals are fit and proper; and

.3 the minimum requirements for the delivery of qualifying sessions by an Inn.

Overview

1 The Inns of Court ("Inns") alone have the power to Call a student to the Bar. Only those Called to the Bar are able to exercise rights of audience in the superior courts of England and Wales as barristers.

2 The Inns are professional membership associations for barristers in England and Wales, dedicated to promoting the rule of law and providing education and training to their student and barrister members.

Joining an Inn of Court

3 You must be admitted as student member of an Inn in order to complete compulsory **qualifying sessions** (see **Part 5B** of this Bar Qualification Manual) before Call to the Bar and to facilitate the fit and proper person checks that are required as part of that process. Our Authorisation Framework specifies the latest point for a student to become a member of an Inn of Court.

4 Your choice of Inn does not affect the area of law in which you wish to practise, or your choice of pupillage (see **Part 4** of this Bar Qualification Manual) or tenancy – it is usually a matter of personal preference. We suggest that you visit the Inns and talk to current members and to the Student Officers to inform your decision.

Contact information

5 The four Inns of Court are:

The Honourable Society of The Inner Temple ;

The Honourable Society of The Middle Temple ;

The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn ; and

The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn .

Fit and Proper person checks

6 We have agreed detailed Guidelines with all four Inns of Court and the Inns Conduct Committee (ICC) for determining whether you are a fit and proper person, how any disclosures about your conduct will be considered and, where appropriate, likely outcomes. The Inns and the ICC will apply the Guidelines when seeking to determine whether an applicant or a student is a fit and proper person to become a practising barrister. We recommend you refer to these Guidelines if you require any further information. More information on the fit and proper person checks can be found online.

7 On application to join an Inn, you must complete an Admission Declaration . This enables the Inn to identify any issues which may call into question whether you are a fit and proper person to become a practising barrister.

8 If there are any matters which might call into question your fitness to become a practising barrister, the Inn will refer your application to the ICC for determination.

Student conduct

9 Once you are a member of an Inn, and before you are Called to the Bar, your conduct will be overseen, and any concerns managed, by your Inn to ensure that only those who are fit and proper to practise as a barrister can be Called to the Bar.

Call to the Bar

10 To ensure that only those who are fit and proper persons to practise as barristers are Called to the Bar, the Inn will undertake checks, including a Call Declaration from each applicant or student, prior to Call.

Resources

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Temporary Admission & Call Form (Qualified Foreign Lawyer)

Current Readmission Declaration

5B: Qualifying Sessions

This section includes information on the Qualifying Sessions to be completed by student members of the Inns of Court.

Bar Qualification Rules

BSB Handbook

Rule Q3 To be called to the Bar by an Inn an individual must have successfully completed the following:

.1 academic legal training ;

.2 vocational training ;

.3 the number of qualifying sessions as a student member of an Inn as prescribed from time to time by the BSB ; and

.4 pay such fee or fees as may be prescribed.

Rule Q6 The BSB shall set out in writing:

.1 the requirements to be met by an Inn in admitting student members and calling individuals to the Bar ;

.2 the manner in which an Inn shall assess whether such individuals are fit and proper; and

.3 the minimum requirements for the delivery of qualifying sessions by an Inn .

Overview

1 Before being Called to the Bar, you must complete Qualifying Sessions which are organised by your Inn. These are professional development events of an educational and collegiate nature arranged by, or on behalf of, an Inn. From 1 September 2020, the number of sessions which must be completed prior to Call to the Bar is **Ten** .

2 Qualifying Sessions are designed to complement the vocational component of training and foster a community of professional practice.

3 Each Inn is responsible, in co-operation with the other Inns, for:

ensuring that suitable Qualifying Sessions are available for its members

deciding what requirements must be satisfied for a person to be credited with attendance at one or more Qualifying Sessions; and

agreeing criteria which specify the grounds on which the requirement to attend Qualifying Sessions may be waived or modified.

Resources

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Framework for the provision of Qualifying Sessions

5C: Call to the Bar

This section includes information on the requirements for Call to the Bar of England and Wales.

Bar Qualification Rules

BSB Handbook

Rule Q3 To be called to the Bar by an Inn an individual must have successfully completed the following:

.1 academic legal training;

.2 vocational training;

.3 the number of qualifying sessions as a student member of an Inn as prescribed from time to time by the BSB; and

.4 pay such fee or fees as may be prescribed.

Rule Q6 The BSB shall set out in writing:

.1 the requirements to be met by an Inn in admitting student members and calling individuals to the Bar;

.2 the manner in which an Inn shall assess whether such individuals are fit and proper; and

.3 the minimum requirements for the delivery of qualifying sessions by an Inn.

Overview

1 To ensure that only those who are fit and proper persons to practise as barristers are Called to the Bar, the Inn will undertake checks and seek declarations from each student prior to Call. The same requirement applies to those seeking re-admission.

2 Upon being Called to the Bar you will become an **unregistered barrister** (see **Part 4K** of this Bar Qualification Manual). You will not be allowed to practise as a barrister until you have completed the final component of qualification, the work-based learning component (pupillage) (see **Part 4** of this Bar Qualification Manual).

3 Pupils will normally have been Called to the Bar by their Inn before commencing pupillage.

Future requirements

We will continue to have a role in the oversight of students intending to become barristers in England and Wales. There will be a continuing partnership with the Inns of Court but with strengthened quality assurance/compliance arrangements in place. This oversight role will continue through our specification of pre-Call and pre-authorisation requirements.

Fit and proper person checks (prior to Call to the Bar)

In line with the new fit and proper person checks , criminal records checks are being introduced for those seeking to be Called from July 2021 onwards. This will be a standard Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and/or the equivalent for those who have lived outside the England and Wales for 12 months (or longer) in the preceding five year period.

Resources

Call Declaration Form

Temporary Admission & Call Form (Qualified Foreign Lawyer)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Guidelines for determining if a person is a fit and proper person

Call to the Bar welcome booklet