

Part 3 - Vocational Component of Bar Training

3A: The BPTC and new Bar training courses

This section includes information on the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and the new Bar Training Courses commencing in September 2020, including entry requirements, an overview of the application process, the course providers, and key statistics.

Overview - entry requirements

1 Applicants for a place on the BPTC or, from 1 September 2020, a new Bar Training Course must:

- a. have completed the academic component of Bar training (see **Part 2** of this Bar Qualification Manual);
- b. be a member of one of the **Inns of Court** (see **Part 5A** of this Bar Qualification Manual); and
- c. be fluent in English.

2 Please note that providers may impose additional selection criteria over and above the minimum requirements specified above. Please check the website of individual providers for more information about their entry requirements.

English language requirement

3 The **Professional Statement** describes the following Competence regarding English language, which should be demonstrated by students before they enrol on the BPTC/a new Bar Training Course.

The Professional Statement

Practical knowledge, skills and attributes

Barristers will:

1.8 Exercise good English language skills.

They will have an effective command of the language and be able to use it appropriately, accurately and fluently so as to handle complex and detailed argumentation. They will use correct English grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Barristers should:

1. Use correct and appropriate vocabulary, English grammar, spelling and punctuation in all communications.
2. Speak fluent English.

4 You must be able to demonstrate that your English language ability is at least equivalent to:

a minimum score of **7.5** in each section of the IELTS academic test, or

a minimum score of **73** in each part of the Pearson Test of English (academic).

5 On entry to the BPTC/a new Bar Training Course, your provider will require you to sign a statement that you are aware of the standard of English Language required, and that you consider that you have met it. If the course provider considers that any aspect of your language ability is not at the required level after you have commenced the course, your provider must (as soon as the issue is identified) require you to:

take one of the language tests above; and

provide a test certificate certifying that you have achieved the required scores within 28 days.

6 Certificates issued by an English language test provider verifying the score achieved by a candidate in one of the above tests must be current and valid by reference to the rules of that English language test provider.

7 If you fail to provide evidence that you have achieved the required scores within **28** days of being asked to do so, your provider must require you to:

withdraw from the course; or

intermit and improve your score prior to being admitted to a new vocational Bar Training Course (subject to meeting any additional entry requirements) in a subsequent year.

Making an application - BarSAS

8 The online application system for the BPTC was the **Bar Student Application Service** (BarSAS). For new Bar Training Courses starting in or after 1 September 2020, BarSAS will cease to exist. Information on how to apply for new courses will be published on our website in due course. For information about Authorised Education and Training Organisations who will deliver vocational Bar training from 2020, see our [page on AETOs from 2020](#).

BPTC Providers

9 The grid below includes contact details for the providers who delivered the BPTC. For information about Authorised Education and Training Organisations who will deliver vocational Bar training from 2020, see our [page on AETOs from 2020](#).

BPP Law School - Birmingham

34-36 Colmore Circus
Birmingham B4 6BN
T: 03331 228 179
[BPP website](#)

BPP Law School - Bristol

Grove Avenue
Bristol BS1 4QY
T: 0333 122 4347
[BPP website](#)

BPP Law School - London

68-70 Red Lion Street
London WC1R 4NY
T: 020 7430 2304
[BPP website](#)

BPP Law School - Leeds

Whitehall - 2 Whitehall Quays
Leeds LS1 4HR
T: 0113 386 8250
F: 0113 245 5177
[BPP website](#)

BPP Law School - Manchester

St. James's Building
79 Oxford Street
Manchester M1 6FQ
T: 0845 077 5566
[BPP website](#)

Cardiff Law School

Cardiff University
Law Building
Museum Ave
Cardiff CF10 3AX
T: 029 2087 6705
[Cardiff website](#)

The City Law School (formerly Inns of Court School of Law)

4 Gray's Inn Place
Gray's Inn
London WC1R 5DX
T: 020 7404 5787
[City Law School website](#)

The University of Law - Birmingham

133 Great Hampton Street
Birmingham B18 6AQ
T: 014 8321 6080
[University of Law website](#)

The University of Law - London

14 Store Street
London WC1E 7DE
T: 0800 289 997
[University of Law website](#)

The University of Law - Leeds

15-16 Park Row
Leeds
LS1 5HD
T: 0800 289997
[University of Law website](#)

Manchester Metropolitan University

School of Law
All Saints West
Lower Ormond Street
Manchester M15 6HB
T: 0161 247 3053
[Manchester Met website](#)

Nottingham Trent University

50 Shakespeare Street
Nottingham
NG1 4FQ
T: 0115 941 8418
[Nottingham Trent website](#)

The University of Northumbria at Newcastle

Northumbria School of Law
City Campus East One
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST
T: 0191 227 3939
[Northumbria website](#)

University of the West of England at Bristol

Faculty of Law
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol BS16 1QY
T: 0117 965 6261 x3769
[UWE website](#)

10 For more information about each provider, please see the [BPTC Provider Information Table](#) or visit the provider's website.

Monitoring visit reports

11 As part of the annual monitoring programme of the BPTC, we carried out visits to BPTC providers. Reports from past visits can be viewed [on our website](#).

12 The overall aim of the review process was to secure a high quality of educational and academic experience for students. Its most important function was to assess the quality and standards of provision of the BPTC, by considering the academic management, content, teaching, learning, assessment and support for the BPTC.

13 This was based on a risk management approach, with a lighter touch where there was confidence in a provider, but there were mechanisms for 'triggered' visits if and when causes for concern arose. The review process also provided a mechanism for quality enhancement and the identification and exchange of good practice.

Key statistics

14 The [BPTC Key Statistics document](#) contains data on the make-up and performance of BPTC students across all providers.

15 Previous key statistics reports are available [on our website](#).

The BPTC Handbook and syllabi

16 Our [2019 BPTC Handbook](#) is available on our website.

17 For the syllabi for the BPTC and new Bar Training Courses, please see **Part 3B** of this Bar Qualification Manual.

Future requirements

If you have not yet completed the BPTC, you will have the opportunity to complete the course as normal, with three attempts at each assessment.

Spring 2021

If, after Spring 2021, you have extenuating circumstances which means you have to defer sitting one of the centralised assessments, then you may be affected by the **transitional arrangements** which we have put in place for centralised assessments.

We have published a statement which sets out what the [transitional arrangements will be for centralised assessments](#) on our website. If you are a current BPTC student, you should read this statement to find out how you may be affected.

3B: BPTC and Bar Training Syllabi

This section includes links to download the course syllabi for the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and the new Bar Training Courses starting in September 2020.

1 The BPTC/Bar Training syllabi documents are for use by BPTC/Bar Training students and providers, and Bar Transfer Test candidates.

2 If you have any questions about the syllabi documents, you should contact your BPTC/Bar Training provider.

[Bar Training Civil Litigation Syllabus 2021-22 \(Sep 2021 - White Book 2021 Version\)](#)

[Bar Training Civil Litigation Syllabus 2021-22 \(Summary of changes\)](#)

[Bar Training Criminal Litigation Syllabus 2022 \(December 2021\) and Tracked Changes version.](#)

[Bar Training Civil Litigation Syllabus 2022-23 \(Sep 2022 - White Book 2022 Version\) and Tracked Changes version.](#)

[Bar Training Civil Litigation Syllabus 2022-2023 \(Summary of changes\)](#)

3C: The Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT)

Following the Legal Services Board's (LSB) approval of our application to change our rules, we have abolished the requirement that prospective Bar training students should pass the Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT) before starting vocational training. This came into effect from 31 July 2022.

Therefore, if you are starting the vocational training in September 2022 (or at a later date), you do **not** need to take the BCAT, and:

If you have not scheduled your BCAT, you should not do so as it is no longer an entry requirement for the course. If you have scheduled your BCAT, you can cancel your test via the Pearson VUE website (<https://home.pearsonvue.com/bsb/onvue>). You are able to cancel 24 hours before a scheduled exam to be eligible for a refund from Pearson VUE. The BSB does not deal with exam bookings or cancellations (with the exception of candidates who require reasonable adjustments).

If you have already taken your BCAT, we are not offering any refunds. In April 2022, we issued a press release about our seeking to abolish the test (<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/resources/bsb-seeks-to-abolish-the-bar-course-aptitude-test.html>). We also advised candidates that those starting in September should wait for the outcome of our application to the Legal Services Board before scheduling a BCAT exam (Bar Qualification Manual 3C BCAT).

Future requirements

If you have not yet completed the BPTC, you will have the opportunity to complete the course as normal, with three attempts at each assessment.

Spring 2021

If, after Spring 2021, you have extenuating circumstances which means you have to defer sitting one of the centralised assessments, then you may be affected by the **transitional arrangements** which we have put in place for centralised assessments.

We have published a statement which sets out what the **transitional arrangements will be for centralised assessments** on our website. If you are a current BPTC student, you should read this statement to find out how you may be affected.

3D: Centralised assessments

This section includes information on the vocational component centralised assessments including what subjects are covered by the exams, what to do before the exams and on the day of sitting, marking and results, and the results review process.

Contact: Exams@barstandardsboard.org.uk

Overview

1 Vocational component centralised examinations are set on our behalf by the **Central Examination Board** (CEB). The CEB consists of a group of senior examiners, including experienced legal practitioners and academics. Psychometric and examination experts support the work of the CEB.

2

Centralised examinations were introduced to ensure consistency across course providers, and closer regulatory oversight of standards in knowledge subjects.

The following Bar Training subjects are centrally examined:

Civil Litigation and Evidence; and

Criminal Litigation, Evidence and Sentencing.

Exam	Duration	No of questions	Marking
Civil Litigation (paper 1)	2 hours	50 Multiple Choice questions (MCQs)	Electronically – by the BSB
Civil Litigation (paper 2)	2.5 hours	40 Multiple Choice questions (MCQs) including rolling case scenarios	Electronically – by the BSB
Criminal Litigation	3 hours	75 Multiple Choice questions (MCQs)	Electronically – by the BSB

The following BPTC subjects are centrally examined:

Civil Litigation and Evidence; and
Criminal Litigation, Evidence and Sentencing.

Exam	Duration	No of questions	Marking
Civil Litigation	3 hours	75 Multiple Choice questions (MCQs)	Electronically – by the BSB
Criminal Litigation	3 hours	75 Multiple Choice questions (MCQs)	Electronically – by the BSB

Bar Training Civil Litigation Paper Two is an open book examination. The materials you are permitted to use are:

- A copy of the White Book, which can be highlighted
- Sticky notes, which can be used to mark sections of the White Book
- Sticky notes with annotations and notes

You are not permitted to use any additional loose material.

Standard Setting

3 The standard for success is determined at each sitting based on the difficulty of the questions (using a criterion-referenced [standard setting technique](#)) and so may differ between sittings.

Examination dates

4

The BPTC cohort sits its centralised examinations on the same day at the same time. The Bar Training cohort sits its centralised examinations on the same day at the same time. In light of COVID-19, please [see our statement](#).

BPTC students

Exam sitting	Exam	Date and Time
2022 - Spring	BPTC Professional Ethics	Please contact your Provider as this is not a BSB assessment
	BPTC Civil Litigation	Tuesday 26 April 2022
	BPTC Criminal Litigation	Monday 25 April 2022

Results will be sent to Providers on Friday 17 June 2022. Students should contact their Provider to find out the specific date on which the results will be released to them.

Bar training students

Exam sitting

2022 - Spring

Exam date

Bar Training Criminal Litigation
Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1)
Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)

Date and time

Monday 25 April 2022
Wednesday 27 April 2022
Friday 29 April 2022

Results will be sent to AETOs on Wednesday 1 June 2022. Students should contact their AETO to find out the specific date on which the results will be released to them.

2022 - Summer

Bar Training Criminal Litigation
Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1)
Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)

Monday 15 August 2022

Wednesday 17 August 2022

Friday 19 August 2022

Results will be sent to AETOs on Wednesday 28 September 2022. Students should contact their AETO to find out the specific date on which the results will be released to them.

2022 - Winter

Bar Training Criminal Litigation
Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1)
Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)

Thursday 1 December 2022

Monday 5 December 2022

Wednesday 7 December 2022

Results will be sent to AETOs on Friday 27 January 2023. Students should contact their AETO to find out the specific date on which the results will be released to them.

2023 - Spring

Bar Training Criminal Litigation
Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1)
Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)

Monday 24 April 2023

Wednesday 26 April 2023

Friday 28 April 2023

Results will be sent to AETOs at the end of May / early June 2023. Students should contact their AETO to find out the specific date on which the results will be released to them.

2023 - Summer	Bar Training Criminal Litigation	Monday 14 August 2023
	Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1)	
	Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	

		Wednesday 16 August 2023

		Friday 18 August 2023

Results will be sent to AETOs at the end of September / early October 2023. Students should contact their AETO to find out the specific date on which the results will be released to them.

2023 - Winter	Bar Training Criminal Litigation	Friday 1 December 2023
	Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 1)	
	Bar Training Civil Litigation (paper 2)	

		Monday 4 December 2023

		Wednesday 6 December 2023

Results will be sent to AETOs at the end of January / early February 2024. Students should contact their AETO to find out the specific date on which the results will be released to them.

About the exams

5 Although we regulate the content and delivery of the BPTC/Bar Training Courses, there are a wide range of issues that are addressed by the course providers. The majority of queries relating to Centralised Examinations are answered in this Bar Qualification Manual; however, there are times when you might need to contact someone should you not find the answer you need or if you require further advice.

6 Your course provider should be contacted about any queries relating to the following examination queries:

- Mitigating circumstances
- Overseas examinations
- Fit to sit queries
- Exam deferrals
- Where the provider has failed to address an examination query
- Mock examinations and revision materials
- Results release dates
- Clerical error checks
- Institution's policies and procedures relating to examinations

Please consult your course provider's website or your student advice centre for the relevant contacts at your provider.

7 We are responsible for, and should be contacted about, the following examination queries:

- Enhanced clerical error checks
- Requests for review

Quality assurance of exam papers

8 Centralised examination questions are written by experienced legal practitioners and academics contracted by us. The examining team meets to scrutinise and approve each question. These comprise an agreed exam paper, which is then tested under exam conditions, and is further reviewed to assess the validity and currency of any referenced law. Exam papers also undergo scrutiny by our syllabus team to ensure all questions comply with the current curriculum. Any recommendations made during these processes are then passed on to the Chief Examiner responsible for the relevant subject who will advise of the changes to be implemented in the paper. Our staff implement any required changes before the paper is proof-read by a professional proof reader.

9 To determine the pass mark of the centralised examination papers, we conduct standard setting. All pass marks are reported as **60%** to providers.

10 After completion of the quality assurance processes, the paper is ready to be printed and delivered to the providers.

Sitting exams overseas

11 Some, but not all, providers allow candidates to sit exams overseas at their discretion. It is the responsibility of the provider to arrange overseas exams. You should contact your provider for further information.

Reasonable adjustments

12 If you have a disability and require additional arrangements to sit centralised examinations, you must contact your course provider. The provider will liaise with us on your behalf.

Mock examination paper

13 We provide a centrally set mock exam paper for each of the centralised examinations. Mock exams are administered by providers and they will advise when the mock exam paper will be available.

Fit to sit

14 Every provider operates a different "fit to sit" policy. Some providers require candidates to complete a "fit to sit" form at the time of an exam. Other providers will complete this process at time of enrolment where candidates will declare that if they are present at the time of the exam, they are fit to sit the exam.

On the day

15 At the Ethics examination, candidates will be given:

an exam paper

an SAQ answer booklet in which to record answers

16 At the Civil / Criminal examination, candidates will be given:

an exam paper

an optical mark read (OMR) sheet on which to record answers

17 All documents must be returned to the invigilator at the end of the exam. Only writing materials and an eraser are allowed in the exam room.

18 You are responsible for managing your time to complete the exam within the time allowed. Only answers given in the MCQ (OMR) sheet or SAQ answer book will be accepted. It is essential that the instructions on completing the SAQ answer booklet are followed correctly. It is your responsibility to ensure answers are legible and answer booklet/sheets are correctly identified with your candidate number.

Extenuating circumstances

19 Extenuating circumstances may prevent you from sitting an exam. You should contact your provider for further information.

Quality assurance of marking

20 Centralised examinations are marked by us. To ensure consistency and quality, the following processes are in place:

a. MCQs (Civil and Criminal Litigation)

After the exam, MCQ answer sheets are returned to us and scanned by an Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) machine which captures the answers selected by the candidate. This process removes the risk of errors associated with human input and enables accurate production of statistics and results analysis.

b. SAQs (Professional Ethics)

SAQ answer booklets are sent to us for marking by a pool of suitably qualified individuals (including academics working at providers, barristers and solicitors),

following the mark scheme provided by the BSB. For a more detailed explanation of the marking process please read the latest Chair's Report.

Quality assurance of results

21 Once the marking is completed, statistical data is generated and presented at examination boards.

22 There is a **Subject Exam Board** (SEB) per examination. The purpose of each SEB is to review and moderate the overall cohort results of the paper and to make recommendations to the **Final Exam Board** (FEB).

23 The SEB uses a number of information sources, including statistical data both past and present, Chief Examiners' and invigilators' reports, and feedback from providers. In addition, a psychometrician attends to provide expert advice and an independent observer attends to provide oversight and report to us.

24 The SEB considers the performance of questions and recommends either accepting the results or intervening. For details of previous interventions, please read the relevant **Chair's report**.

25 The FEB considers the recommendations made by the SEBs and either agrees or amends them. We apply any agreed interventions and generates results per provider. The process involves a series of manual and electronic checks to ensure that providers receive accurate results.

Results review process

26 Examination answers are not re-marked but you may request:

- a clerical error check;
- an enhanced clerical error check; and/or
- a request for review

27 You may request a **clerical error check** if you believe that your marks have been captured incorrectly.

<i>How to apply</i>	Contact the course provider.
<i>Deadline</i>	Applications must be received within 10 days of results release (date of despatch, not receipt).
<i>Outcomes</i>	The Candidate Review Process policy details possible outcomes of reviews.
<i>Fee</i>	Contact your provider.

28 You may request an **enhanced clerical error check** if you believe there has been any error in the computation, scaling or transcription of marks by us that may have affected the outcome of an examination.

<i>How to apply</i>	Enhanced clerical checks may only be requested following an initial clerical error check. You should download, complete and return an Enhanced clerical error check application form to us.
<i>Deadline</i>	Applications must be received within 10 days of the result of the clerical error check.
<i>Outcomes</i>	An outcome will be communicated to you within 20 working days of receipt of the request or payment, whichever is later.
<i>Fee</i>	£60 per subject, paid on submission of application by telephoning the Exams team on 020 7611 1444 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

29 The request for review challenges the decisions of the CEB. There is only one ground on which a request for review can be considered: breach of natural justice by the CEB. You should carefully consider whether you have the required evidence to challenge on this ground. You must consult the **Chair's report** to assist in the preparation of a submission. There is no further appeal process in place.

<i>How to apply</i>	Download, complete and return a request for review form to us.
<i>Deadline</i>	5pm on Thursday 21 July 2022 for the April Bar Training 2022 examinations.
<i>Outcomes</i>	The Results Review Process policy details possible outcomes of reviews.
<i>Fee</i>	£250 per subject, paid on submission of application by telephoning our Exams Team on 020 7611 1444 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

30 Payment for the review processes undertaken by us must be submitted at the same time as your request. If your payment is declined, we will contact you to rectify the matter and a second payment attempt will be made. Should the second attempt be declined, your review application will be deemed void and therefore rejected.

Chair's report

31 To ensure the transparency of the centralised examinations, the Chair of the Centralised Examinations Board publishes a report for each examination cycle, detailing statistical data for each sit and interventions applied. Reports are published for examinations in Civil Litigation and Criminal Litigation (taken during the vocational component of Bar training) and for the Professional Ethics examination (taken during pupillage). The reports are one element of a range of qualitative and quantitative data that we use to oversee the provision of Bar training. The Chair's reports are factual. We will take an annual report on the operation of Bar training to the Board in December of each year which will include a more reflective overview by the Chair and where we will further reflect beyond the centralised assessments on the wider operation of Bar training during the year.

32 Request for Review applicants are advised to carefully read the data contained in the Chair's Report before making an application. Current reports are available below. Previous Chair's reports are available on request from our Exams Team.

- [Spring 2022 Bar Training Chair's report](#)

33 Previous Chair's reports are available on request to our Exams Team.

Future requirements

If you have not yet completed the BPTC, you will have the opportunity to complete the course as normal, with three attempts at each assessment.

Spring 2021

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We have published a statement which sets out what the **transitional arrangements** will be for centralised assessments on our website. If you are a current BPTC student, you should read this statement to find out how you may be affected.

Report of the Chair of the Centralised Examinations Board (CEB) for the August and October 2020 examinations

Read more about the [Chair of the CEB's report for the August and October 2020 examinations](#) in our [COVID-19 vocational components FAQs](#).

See also:

[The introduction of a Professional Ethics assessment during pupillage Work Based learning](#)

[BPTC Ethics sample paper and mark scheme](#)

[The 2020-21 BPTC and Bar Training syllabi](#)

3E: Exemptions and waivers (vocational)

This section includes information on exemptions and waivers from the vocational component of Bar training.

Overview

1 Formerly, the vocational component of Bar training was satisfied by completion of the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC). New Bar Training Courses under a number of different titles will be introduced from September 2020. [Details of these courses](#) may be found on our website.

2 Bar Training Courses must be undertaken in their entirety. There are no partial waivers of these courses for prior learning or experience gained before starting the vocational component. However, you may be granted exemption from a Bar Training Course if you have qualified in another jurisdiction, or as a solicitor in England and Wales. This type of exemption will usually be conditional on passing sections of the Bar Transfer Test (see [Part 7D](#) of this Bar Qualification Manual).

3 The rules regarding exemption from any of the individual components of Bar training are set out in the [BSB Handbook](#) at **Rules Q7-Q12**.

4 More information for qualified lawyers who wish to transfer to the Bar of England and Wales can be found in [Part 7](#) of this Bar Qualification Manual.

5 More information on exemptions relating to the academic component of Bar training can be found in [Part 2E](#) of this Bar Qualification Manual.

Future requirements

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