



25 September 2020

BAR EXAMINATIONS

Now that the Bar Standards Board has announced its plans to help students adversely affected by August's computer-based examinations, I wanted to write to all those affected to repeat our apology for the difficulties you experienced in August and to say how much I sympathise with your predicament.

The health emergency has disrupted many aspects of life in the UK and overseas. But there can be few things worse than having examinations for which you have been preparing for almost a year cancelled and your careers and aspirations put on hold as a result. It was for that reason that the Bar Standards Board organised computer-based examinations last month. The alternative would have been to leave students in limbo until December.

I am really very sorry that the August examinations proved so difficult and distressing for so many of you. That should not have happened. We shall undertake an independent inquiry to find out what went wrong. But, meanwhile, we are working with providers to organise a pen and paper re-sit in October for those of you who experienced technical difficulties last month or simply feel you were unable to give your best performance. You will keep the better of the August and October marks. If you prefer, you can decide to wait for the August results and then sit again in December if you need to do so.

Whatever you decide, you have my best wishes for your future careers and renewed apologies for the difficulties you have experienced in the last six months.

Baroness Tessa Blackstone
Chair, Bar Standards Board