

**Candidate Brief**

**External Examiners**

**2020**

**About the Bar Standards Board**

The Bar Standards Board (“BSB”) is responsible for:

* setting the education and training requirements for becoming a barrister;
* setting continuing training requirements to ensure that barristers' skills are maintained throughout their careers;
* setting standards of conduct for barristers;
* authorising organisations that focus on advocacy, litigation, and specialist legal advice;
* monitoring the service provided by barristers and the organisations we authorise to assure quality; and
* considering reported concerns about barristers and the organisations we authorise and taking enforcement or other action where appropriate.

The work that we do is governed by The Legal Services Act 2007 as well as a number of other statutes.

You can read more about the work that we do and how we do it on our [website](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us.html).

**Bar Training**

Barristers play a vital role in the administration of justice. They must demonstrate a high standard of professional practice to justify the trust placed in them by the public and other professionals. The Bar Standards Board is responsible for setting the education and training requirements for becoming a barrister. There are three components to training to become a barrister. These are the academic, the vocational and the pupillage or work-based learning components. Our focus in relation to education and training is on setting and maintaining standards at the point of authorisation (i.e. the award of a first practising certificate).

The vocational component of Bar training is delivered by organisations that we authorise (called Authorised Education and Training Organisations or “AETOs”). All are universities or in partnership with a university and all are registered with the Office for Students. A current list of AETOs is available on our [website](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/becoming-a-barrister/vocational-component/aetos-from-2020.html). They provide training and certain assessments in accordance with our [Curriculum and Assessment Strategy](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/information-for-aetos/curriculum-and-assessment-strategy.html).

You can read more about the vocational component of Bar training on our [website](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/becoming-a-barrister/vocational-component.html).

**Why we are recruiting**

We are recruiting a new team of External Examiners because from September 2020 we are changing the way that our External Examiners work, reflecting the reforms to Bar training that we have introduced. Firstly, the External Examiners will focus on monitoring the consistency of standards of assessments and will no longer be required to consider student experience. Secondly, instead of working in pairs to examine specific AETOs, our External Examiners will focus on specific subjects across the full range of vocational AETOs.

**Role of the External Examiners**

The system of External Examiners operates broadly in accordance with the [QAA’s Quality Code (chapter B7)](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b7_-external-examining.pdf?sfvrsn=2101f781_8). External Examiners provide us with specialist advice on the consistency of standards of the assessments set by the AETOs. Our External Examiners are responsible for confirming whether or not:

* the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly in line with the [Curriculum and Assessment Strategy](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/information-for-aetos/curriculum-and-assessment-strategy.html); and
* the standards and the achievements of students are consistent between AETOs.

**Subject Specialist External Examiners**

Subject Specialist External Examiners act on behalf of the BSB in monitoring the consistency of standards of assessments set by AETOs in their specialist subject area. These are:

1. Advocacy
2. Professional Ethics
3. Opinion Writing and Legal Research
4. Drafting
5. Conference Skills

External Examiners:

* Approve the form and content of proposed summative assessments set by AETOs (i.e. examination papers, oral and other assessments) before implementation. In doing so, they ensure the types of assessment are appropriate for the subject, the students and whether the expected outcomes are in line with the [Curriculum and Assessment Strategy](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/information-for-aetos/curriculum-and-assessment-strategy.html);
* Decide whether assessment processes are carried out in accordance with the AETO’s assessment regulations and with the BSB’s requirements which must take precedence. In doing so, they assess whether the marking scheme/grading criteria have been properly and consistently applied, and internal marking is therefore of fair, reliable and of an appropriate standard. They do this by:
  + scrutinising the work completed by a representative sample of students;
  + reviewing samples of referred work to ensure the equivalence of standards of marking so that re-sits are not graded more leniently; and
  + moderating cohort marks awarded by internal examiners, requesting review or remarking of the whole cohort if there are concerns that the marking guidance has not been adhered to. (Subject Specialists moderate the scripts, they do not re-mark; they must not act as a third marker under any circumstances, and hence should not adjust individual grades but rather ensure that, where marking is too strict or too generous, the AETO reviews the whole cohort and makes adjustments accordingly).
* Decide whether procedures governing mitigating/extenuating circumstances, academic integrity/misconduct and borderline performances have been considered fairly and equitably applying institutional regulations. They do this by:
  + attending the meetings of the Assessment Boards on behalf of the BSB, ensuring that recommendations have been reached according to BSB requirements, which may include reviewing mitigating circumstances.
  + considering and having the final ruling in consultation with the BSB on any case where a “Fatal Flaw” is committed, in line with the [Curriculum and Assessment Strategy](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/information-for-aetos/curriculum-and-assessment-strategy.html).
* Contribute to the interim and annual reports to the AETO course leaders and to the BSB on the effectiveness of the assessments and lessons to be drawn from them.
* Escalate to the Subject Lead any matters of serious concern arising from the assessments which might put at risk the standards of Bar training.
* Attend, either remotely or in person, BSB meetings to discuss external examiner issues and any relevant training events.

We are recruiting 11 Subject Specialist External Examiners (two to three for each subject area). Subject Specialist External Examiners will be required to work with other Subject Specialists and Subject Leads to produce interim and annual reports.

All work can be done remotely. External Examiners will no longer be required to visit AETOs to assess student experience. Some travel may be required to attend Extenuating Circumstance and Final Boards, although remote attendance is permissible.

**Subject Lead External Examiners**

We are recruiting 5 Subject Lead External Examiners. In addition to acting as a Subject Specialist External Examiner, Subject Leads will:

* be responsible for taking an overview of assessments in their subject area across all AETOs to ensure consistency of assessment on behalf of the BSB;
* oversee the work of the team of Subject Specialist External Examiners for their subject area across all AETOs;
* co-ordinate the work of the relevant Subject Specialist External Examiners to provide an interim and annual written report to the Bar Standards Board’s Supervision Team and the AETO course leaders and report immediately any matters of serious concern which might put at risk the standards of Bar training;
* assist the BSB in identifying training needs for Subject Specialist External Examiners and contribute to training.

**Eligibility criteria**

Candidates will be asked to confirm their eligibility at the time of appointment and throughout the duration of their appointment.

The BSB is required to keep its regulatory activities separate from any representative activities in relation to barristers and, specifically, we must remain independent of the Bar Council. We therefore require that External Examiners do not have any close relationship with the Bar Council, e.g. as a member of a Bar Council representative committee, working group or as an advisor to the Bar Council, at the same time as appointment as an External Examiner. If a person wishes to be appointed as an External Examiner, they will be required to give up their membership of relevant bodies.

We also ask members to declare any close association with any other body that represents or is strongly affiliated to the Bar, for example the Inns of Court or Specialist Bar Associations.

External Examiners must declare any conflict of interest with the AETOs delivering Bar training (i.e. they must say if they are or have recently been a member of staff at any AETOs or have any other material connection such as a child studying at an AETO).

In accordance with the [QAA’s Quality Code (chapter B7)](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/chapter-b7_-external-examining.pdf?sfvrsn=2101f781_8), External Examinersmust not hold more than one other external examiner role in another Higher Education Institution.

We ask that all candidates notify us of:

* any previous or pending supervisory action, complaint, investigation, disciplinary proceedings or disciplinary findings against them under any applicable disciplinary system;
* any other conduct which calls into question their honesty, integrity, financial position or respect for the law. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, both personal and professional activities and media comment (including social media comment), which may or may not have given rise to adverse publicity; and
* any other matter, which if it was in the public domain, might risk diminishing public confidence in the regulator.

The associations and declarations listed above do not necessarily make a candidate ineligible to be appointed as an External Examiner. We will consider any information provided on its individual facts and we may ask for more information before progressing an application further or we may explore with the candidate at interview. However, the BSB reserves the right to deem a candidate as ineligible if we consider the nature of any associations and/or declarations make the candidate unsuitable for selection.

The BSB reserves the right to make its own enquiries and checks to verify the declarations made.

**Essential skills and competences**

Subject Specialist External Examiners will:

* Have previous experience of teaching, learning and assessments and/or have professional expertise in the relevant subject area.
* Have current knowledge of the relevant subject area.
* Be familiar with the [quality assurance](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/UK-Quality-Code-for-Higher-Education-2013-18) practices established in UK Higher Education.
* Have an appropriate understanding of equality and discrimination law, and unconscious bias, in so far as it is relevant to the role.
* Be able to communicate clearly, effectively and persuasively.
* Demonstrate a high degree of professional integrity, impartiality and independence.
* Be able to listen, observe and draw objective conclusions.
* Be able to work as part of a team in a professional and collegiate manner.
* Be able to respond positively to developmental feedback and develop within the role.

Subject Lead External Examiners will, in addition to the above:

* Have previous experience as an External Examiner.
* Have team leadership experience.

**Time commitment**

As an External Examiner, you will be required to plan your responsibilities around other commitments and workloads so that you are able to manage the role in a timely manner. The time commitment is set out in Annex 1 and includes the time required to:

* Review assessment instruments and AETO marking.
* Meet with other relevant Subject Specialist External Examiners to consider consistency across AETOs.
* Prepare written reports.
* Attend Assessment Board meetings.

External Examiners will also be required to participate in induction, any applicable training and other meetings.

For a limited transition period, some additional work will be needed in relation to the BPTC resit assessments for a diminishing number of students who have still to complete their vocational training under the previous curriculum. This will be agreed with External Examiners on an as-needed basis. You can read more about the transitional arrangements for vocational Bar Training on our [website](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/becoming-a-barrister/transitional-arrangements.html).

**Fees**

External Examiners will enter into a consultancy agreement for services with the BSB and will not be employed by the BSB.

External Examiners will be remunerated at the rates shown in Annex 1, plus expenses as permitted by our expenses policy.

External Examiners will be paid at the rates specified in Annex 1 as a gross figure and will be responsible for their own tax and national insurance. Given the advisory nature of the roles we anticipate that External Examiners will usually be covered by BSB insurance arrangements. Should there prove to be a need for any additional insurance, responsibility for obtaining and funding this will lie with the External Examiners.

The consultancy agreement will be renewed annually for up to 3 years, with voluntary break clauses where the External Examiner or the BSB would prefer to terminate the agreement. Annual reviews of individual member performance will be conducted as part of this process.

**BSB policies**

All External Examiners are expected to adhere to the BSB’s policies, including health and safety, dignity at work, confidentiality and data security, declarations of interest (including dealing with conflicts of interest), gifts and hospitality, and equality and diversity.

**Application Process**

Applications should be made to [EErecruitment@barstandardsboard.org.uk](mailto:EErecruitment@barstandardsboard.org.uk) including:

* **A full CV** detailing your qualifications, employment, skills and experience;
* A **covering letter** (of no more than three pages) stating why the position you are applying for interests you, how you meet the selection criteria detailed in this candidate brief;

At shortlisting stage, we will require candidates to complete the following:

* **A completed Supporting Details Form** including contact details, declarations and associations relevant to membership (as detailed in this candidate brief), and names and contact details of a minimum of two professional referees; and
* **A completed Equality & Diversity Monitoring Form** (if you wish to complete it). This form is confidential, will be kept separately from your application and is for monitoring purposes only. We are asking for this information from you to help us meet our equality duties and to ensure that we understand the impact of our recruitment practices in relation to the protected characteristics. By monitoring and analysing this information we can understand then act to ensure our practices promote equality and remove any practices that could lead to unlawful discrimination.
* You may apply for more than one position, as your expertise permits.

If you wish to seek a reasonable adjustment to the recruitment process for any reason, please tell us when making your application.

The BSB aims to recruit talented candidates and values diversity in background, skills and experience. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all applicants.

*Please note that we will retain your application information for a period of one year after receipt.*

**Timetable**

Closing date for applications: 1 July 2020

Interviews: Week commencing 13 July 2020

Induction training: w/c 17 August (to be confirmed)

Start date: September 2020

**Annex 1**

**External Examiner Subject Specialist fee**

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| **Assessments** | **Vacancies (including Subject Lead)** | **Time Commitment per academic year and Fee associated with activity**  *(Subject to attending Extenuating Circumstance and Final Boards at AETOs and sampling size)* |
| **Opinion Writing/Legal Research** | x3 vacancies | **Activity**: Assure consistency of assessments across all AETOs by reviewing all assessments for one subject area  **Fee per subject:** £150, exceptOpinion Writing/Legal Research = £200 |
| **Drafting** | x3 vacancies | **Activity:** Co-ordinate with the AETO to ensure they are briefed about any issues noted in the review of assessments  **Fee per subject:** £100 |
| **Conference Skills** | x3 vacancies | **Activity:** BSB rep at Final/Extenuating Boards  **Fee per subject:** £150 |
| **Advocacy** | x4 vacancies | **Activity:** Feed into an oversight report by the subject Lead  **Fee per subject:** £150 |
| **Professional Ethics** | x3 vacancies | **Activity:** Sample final marking  *Variable fee per sample size:*  **1-15 = £308**  **16-30 = £616**  **31+ = £924** |

**External Examiner Subject Leads fee**

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| **Assessments** | **Fee** |
| **Opinion Writing/Legal Research** | £308 |
| **Drafting** | £308 |
| **Conference Skills** | £308 |
| **Advocacy** | £616 |
| **Professional Ethics** | £308 |