Bar Vocational Studies (BVS) online chat session

This online chat session is for students interested in studying our BVS at The City Law School. The session will be run by academic staff, giving you the opportunity to ask questions about your chosen course at City, University of London. As this is a typed chat group session, you will be able to see the answers to questions asked by other applicants.

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Thank you for joining us for today's CityChat session. This session is for students interested in studying our Bar Vocational Studies course. This session runs from 12:00 - 13:00 (GMT). This is an open chat session for you to ask any questions you have regarding these courses and life at City, University of London. During the session, we may also share videos, polls or documents related to your course.

To ask a question, please type it in the chat box. Your question will not post straight away - it will be sent to our Moderators who will type an answer back. Once their answer is complete, it will be published with your question. Please make sure you say which course you have applied to when you post your question. You are also welcome to post just saying hi and introducing yourself!

Hello everyone and welcome. I am Lisa Laurenti, Deputy Course Director

Hi, I am Sean Carrigan - Admissions Officer for the BVS programmes.

I have some questions to ask regarding the BPTC

Please go ahead

Hello everyone, welcome to our Bar Vocational Studies chat session. Please post any questions here and we will answer them as best as we can.

Hello hope you all are well

Hey guys, when is the deadline for application to do the BVC?

Hi, applications are currently open and will remain open either until all the places are full or until one month before the course begins, whichever comes first. My advice is to submit an application earlier rather than later.
Hello, I am an Alumni of City University having completed my LLM in 2016. I am planning to enrol for BPTC, however I have heard that there are other Bar related courses which have started or yet to start. Please may I get information in this regard?

Hi, Yes the Bar course at City has now changed and there are three routes to choose from -
https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/law/courses/professional/bar-training

**Bar Training at City**

Designed for aspiring barristers, City’s Bar Vocational Studies Course programme is for those individuals dedicated to a professional legal career as well as people seeking a career change.

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On your website, it offers an LLM BVC, Is that Masters in Law along with the bar course in order to become a barrister?

Yes. You can undertake the Bar course with additional specialist modules and a dissertation/project to gain sufficient credits for an LLM award from the University as well as being Called to the Bar.

Also, please may I know if there are any scholarship or discounts that are available for City Alumni.

Yes - City graduates are eligible for a 10% discount from the stated course fee.

What is the soonest possible time that we can remit payment for Part 1?

Hi, payment can be made any time up until registration. There is nothing to stop you making payment earlier if you would like to.

Hello everyone, my name is

Hello

Will the course be running this year due to the coronavirus

Hello yes the course should still be running as it starts in September. However, if you have chosen the option to study Part 1 online then this should start in July.
Hi! I just have some questions regarding the deposit for the BVS that is paid on acceptance of an offer - does this money go towards the course fee? And if for any reason the offer conditions are not met, is this deposit refunded?

Hi Emma, yes the deposit is part of the total course fee and not charged in addition to the fees. The deposit is refunded if: you cancel your place within 14 days of acceptance OR you fail to meet the entry requirements.

So you will receive an LLM AND THE BPTC

The full title of the award is LLM in Bar Vocational Studies (with specialism). Within this are the requirements for Call.

Hello, I have read experience of numerous barristers from outside the UK, who have been exempted from the BVS due to prior experience. Is there an objective standard for the same or is it based on an individual basis?

Hi, this is not something we would be able to advise on. You would need to speak to the Bar Standards Board regarding this as they are the body that approves applications to be admitted to the Bar without undertaking the BVS.

I just had a quick vague question. Which is how do the students determine whether this is the right course for them?

Hello The Bar Vocational Studies programme is primarily for students who wish to pursue a career as a barrister, so this is a big determining factor. However, there are many transferable skills that can be applied to other legal careers, in particular if you choose the LLM programme option, in which you can specialise in a particular area.

Thank you for hosting. Can a student defer placement on, e.g., LLM BVS once given/accepting an offer?

Yes, as long as you have fully accepted an offer you can defer the place for one academic year.

Hello City University, I wanted to know the scope of BCS

Hi - can you clarify what you mean by the scope please? Do you mean what students will learn?

What is the part 1 or part 2 thing? Can u pls explain?

Hi, there are now 3 BVS programmes at City: 2 Part, Full Time and Part Time. On the 2 part course the course is divided into 2. Part 1 covers preparation for the centrally set exams in Civil and Criminal Litigation. Part 2 covers the skills subjects (such as Advocacy and Opinion Writing). You do not have to opt for the 2 part route. If you take the course full or part time the learning is continuous much as it is now on the BPTC.
Hello everyone, I am a third year law student, semi-retired and living in rural Mid-Wales. My motivation for graduating with a LLB Hons was to allow me to officially give legal advice at say, my local CAB. I am divided between taking the LPC or going for the Bar. So my question is, with my considerable life skills experience in entrepreneurial business and various legal issues entailing from life itself, is - do you advise pursuing both courses? I have appeared in Court as a Litigant in Person and enjoyed a mooting competition. Does my age matter bottomline?

In deciding which course you might wish to undertake, it’s really a question of what type of practice you wish to pursue. You do not need to undertake both courses. Solicitors can obtain higher rights of audience, if that were required. Similarly, barristers can undertake direct access work by undertaking additional training and obtaining authorisation.

How long does it take to process the application?

You should expect a response within 1-2 weeks of applying. However, please note we only make a decision once references are arrived so if your referees take some time to respond to the request that can hold up the decision.

With the options of two parts am I still eligible for student loan?

Hi... only the full time or part time LLM in Bar Vocational Studies is eligible for a student loan. The 2 part course does not qualify.

What is your pupillage success rate? thanks

Hello, The Bar Standards Board Key Statistics for 2019 (p.93) shows that City Law School Bar graduates were more successful in obtaining pupillage than those of any other London provider (students commencing pupillage between October 2013 and March 2019). You can find out about our own Pupillage Advice Service here - [https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/law/careers/career-advice/pupillage-advice-service](https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/law/careers/career-advice/pupillage-advice-service)

Pupillage Advice Service
Pupillage Advisory Service (PAS) offers support to you as soon as you accept your place on the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and whilst you on the course.

Thank you Sean! I was also wondering, depending on how the current coronavirus situation unfolds over the coming weeks/months, there will whether there be any additional open/applicant days over the summer for students who have been unable to visit the City site yet?
Hello, I'm afraid all events including the Postgraduate Open Evening that was due to take place in June have been cancelled. However, hopefully we will be back up and running in the summer to perhaps offer some campus tours.

Does the Part-time LLM BVS costs £16,500? If so, is that the total cost (for 2 years) or annual cost (resulting in a total of £33,000)? Thank you.

Hi, that's the total cost, not the cost per year. So £16,500 in total or £8,250 per year.

Hi, my name is

What is the average strength of a class?

Hello, can you elaborate please? Do you mean in terms of number of people in a class?

What is the deadline to apply for full-scholarship? And when will the result of the applications that obtained it come out?

Hi, you will be informed of application deadlines when an offer is made. Scholarship applications for the BVS are considered on a rolling basis so an earlier application for the programme is encouraged.

You can find out more here: https://www.city.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/scholarships-and-bursaries/the-city-law-school-deans-scholarship-for-academic-excellence

The City Law School Dean's Scholarship for Academic Excellence

Up to ten full-fee scholarships across all The City Law School postgraduate and professional programmes.

What is the soonest possible time in which we can receive our textbooks & other material for Part 1 of the Two-Part BVS in July? Is it possible to receive them before July or would we have to wait until then to receive them? Also, how can one go about remitting payment for part 1?
Hi, you would only get access to course materials from July.

Payment options can be found at https://www.city.ac.uk/student-administration/fees-and-finance/how-to-pay

**How to pay and payment methods**

**Income Team**

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Hello, how is the BVC different from the previous BPTC? Is there less face to face teaching?

Hello, the key difference is that there are different pathways, giving students greater flexibility about how to study. There is a 2 part course, on which you undertake the centrally set knowledge subjects which is delivered online. The second part of the course comprises the skills modules which are taught face to face. Alternatively, you can undertake a fully taught programme that comes in 3 versions: (1) PGDip (i.e. all the compulsory subjects leading to Call) (2) PGDip with specialisms on which you undertake 2 modules in specialist subjects of your choice in addition to the compulsory modules, and finally (3) LLM with specialism, on which you undertake the core subjects, the options and complete a dissertation/project. The latter meets Student Finance England’s funding criteria for a post-grad loan.

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What kind of referee are you looking for?

We need 2 referees, ideally both should be academic. If that’s not possible 1 academic and 1 professional (for example someone you completed work experience with) will be fine.

Hello, I have a question with regards to paying fees - how are they paid, for example every 3 months or..? Thank you

Hi, on the full time course fees are paid in 2 instalments, 50% before the course begins and 50% in January.

Hello, I have been accepted on the LLM in BVS

Congratulations! Let us know if you have any questions.

Will the University assist in any manner with respect to pupillage. If yes, what is the percentage of students who obtain the same in a class?
Hello - The Bar Standards Board Key Statistics for 2019 (p.93) shows that City Law School Bar graduates were more successful in obtaining pupillage than those of any other London provider (students commencing pupillage between October 2013 and March 2019). You can find out about our own Pupillage Advice Service here: [https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/law/careers/career-advice/pupillage-advice-service](https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/law/careers/career-advice/pupillage-advice-service).

**Pupillage Advice Service**

Pupillage Advisory Service (PAS) offers support to you as soon as you accept your place on the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and whilst you on the course.

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Thank you

Thank you Saralyn!

Hi there, I am hoping to apply for the BVC this year and considered doing the LLM with it for the funding. Could you please advise me on the other routes to potentially get additional funding for the course?

The LLM route is the only route of study that qualifies for a student loan. Beyond that we offer scholarships but these are very competitive as you can imagine.

Is the LLM BPTC 1 year, Thanks

Yes, it's one full year from September to the following September.

Who reviews the application?

Applications are reviewed by the admissions office and a small number of senior academic staff.

What is the deadline to apply for full-scholarship? And when will the result of the applications that obtained it come out?

Applications are made on a rolling basis as students apply for places, so the sooner you apply the better your chances of receiving an award.
Are the textbooks and course materials required for the BVS programme all included in the course fee?

Hi, your fees include: Textbooks, including: practitioner books in civil practice and criminal practice, and The City Law School BVS manuals.

What is the tuition fee for the full time BVC without the lim

Hello - Full-time: Postgraduate Diploma fee is £16,500 - for both Home/Eu and International students

Thank you Chris

Thanks Sean

Does it mean a LLM degree on too of my Bar qualification right?

Yes. You will receive an LLM in Bar Vocational Studies (with specialism) from the University and also be Called to the Bar

Thank you Chris

What is the soonest possible time in which we can receive our textbooks & other material for Part 1 of the Two-Part BVS in July? Is it possible to receive them before July or would we have to wait until then to receive them? Also, how can one go about remitting payment for part 1?

Hi - I believe Sean answered your question above?

How large are the lectures and seminar? (How many people roughly in each)

There are very few lectures on the new BVS programmes. Teaching is mostly through workshops and tutorials, made up of 24 and 12 students respectively. Advocacy will be taught in groups of 6.

For the Two-Part BVS, once we pass Part 1, for how long can we ‘defer’ enrollment in Part 2?

You can take a break between Parts 1 and 2 - you will need to complete both parts within 5 years of commencing Part 1.
Once enrolled in a part-time LLM BVS, can you pay/enrol/pass Year 1 and then defer enrollment and payment for Year 2 for one year?

Yes, you can apply to intermit year 2 for one year only. This would also delay payment for one year.

How long is the part time course?

The part time course is taught over 2 years.

Yes he did. Thanks

I am weighing-up whether to undertake the BVS course with a specialism or not (I am interested in the family law specialism) - is it possible to have access to past student feedback who completed the BVS with a specialism in the family law options, or just the specialism modules more generally?

If you email me at [email protected] I can pass any queries you have about the Family module to the co-ordinator.

Is the application automatically considered for the scholarships once submitted? Is there a deadline for acceptance of the offer? Was the starting date of the course confirmed? Can I get an unconditional offer before my GDL results come out to obtain the Tier 4 visa in time? Given the current situation I am concerned that the GDL exams might be affected.

Hi if you are made an offer you will be invited to apply for a scholarship. At the minute the GDL results will be required for beginning the BVS (and so required to obtain a CAS). If the Bar Standards Board (who set the course entry requirements) make any changes to this we will let all applicants know.

Hello Saralyn! I'm sorry for not specific earlier. Yes, the number of people in a class is what I would like to know. Additionally, I did not see moots as part of the course on the website, so i wondering if students will be allowed to participate in moot competitions.
No problem and thanks for clarifying. I think Lisa or Sean can answer the question about class sizes better than myself, but I believe class sizes are kept fairly small - lectures do of course have a lot more students attending, but in terms of mooting, there are plenty of opportunities for law students to take part in mooting activity at City. We host internal moot competitions and actively take part in external competitions - [https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/law/careers/mooting](https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/law/careers/mooting)

**Mooting**

At The City Law School we place a great emphasis on mooting as a way of developing your legal skills whilst providing you with invaluable public speaking experience.

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Students who apply for September full time LLM BVC. When do they receive their teaching materials and books? For instance they accept their offer by this summer

**You will receive the materials in September, not before.**

Apart from Tuition & Accommodation, Food & Transportation Costs, what other costs do we need to take into consideration? For example, do we need to set aside funds for barrister apparel or is that included in the course fees?

**Costs associated with Call and Inn activities are probably the only additional costs.**

I asked the following question a few months ago, but I just wanted to know if anything changed regarding it. If one has completed Part 1 of the BVS, can he then apply for or switch over to the LLM route or will this still not be allowed?

**Yes, this is still the same I’m afraid.**

Thank you Lisa - will do!

Ok. Thanks.

Hello, and thanks to City Law School for hosting.
Hello Saralyn! I'm sorry for not being specific earlier. Yes, the number of people in a class is what I would like to know. Additionally, I did not see mooting as part of the course on the website, so I'm wondering if students will be allowed to participate in moot competitions.

You will see my answer to a similar question regarding class sizes immediately above your query. The School runs Mooting competitions for its students. There are also opportunities to moot through the Inns and we have supported students who have participated in international competitions.

By when must the law aptitude test be completed?

Hi, the opening and closing dates of the test are set by the Bar Standards Board and vary from year to year but please note that the final opportunity to take the test before the full-time course is usually in late August and you must have passed it in order to start the course.

How comes City charges the most out of every other university who also offers the BVC?

Hi, I don’t think we charge the most, however the fees set are a reflection of the experience and expertise of our teaching staff, the extra curricular help we offer students to further their training, such as our Pupillage Advisory Service, and the extra support you will receive across not just the law school, but across the whole of City, University of London.

One of your entry requirements is applying for membership of one of the four Inns of Court 'by the last working day of May’. Will City be lenient with this requirement this year, considering that visit opportunities to the Inns is not limited because of COVID-19?

The Inns have recently changed this to 12 weeks before the BVC begins, rather than the end of May (to take account of new entry points). From our point of view we are governed by what the Inns and the Bar Standards Board decide as Inn membership is one of their requirements so you may want to speak to your Inn to see if they are in discussion with the BSB.

Is accommodation offered? I mean, I live in London but wish to move out. Any support offered by the university?

Hi, we offer a number of variety of accommodation for postgraduate students. You can find out more info here: [https://www.city.ac.uk/study/living-in-london/accommodation/postgraduate-halls](https://www.city.ac.uk/study/living-in-london/accommodation/postgraduate-halls)

Postgraduate halls

Accommodation Team

Hi, Chris - and your answer noted. Thanking you!
Hi, some students may apply even earlier, as it is such a competitive landscape.

Is accommodation offered? I mean, I live in London but wish to move out. Any support offered by the university?

The University does have accommodation available for students, including post-graduate specific buildings. Please see the link to their webpages for more details. The course you chose may also be relevant. [https://www.city.ac.uk/accommodation/postgraduate](https://www.city.ac.uk/accommodation/postgraduate)

**Postgraduate accommodation**

City, University of London students can apply for a place in our modern halls of residence or get help with finding private accommodation in London.

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An introduction to The City Law School

[https://youtu.be/BpeHCBg4lo8](https://youtu.be/BpeHCBg4lo8)

How is the timetable like?

Hi, on the full time course you should expect about 10-12 hours of face to face teaching per week, with another 4-6 hours of online learning. You would normally be timetabled over 3 days with classes between 9 and 6.

Thank you!

Do we have to pay for the aptitude test?
Yes, there is a fee set by the Bar Standards Board. You need to pass this in order to join the course. You can retake the test if you fail (I am not sure if you would need to pay again).

Thanks, Lisa and Sean. Do you know how the accommodation is distributed at City’s Halls i.e. is it guaranteed that I will be able to get an accommodation there upon my application?

Hi. No - it's not guaranteed you need to have accepted an offer on either the PG Dip with Specialism or the LLM route of study then you can apply for a place in halls. For this reason an earlier course application is encouraged.

Do we have to pay for the aptitude test?

I enclose a link to the BSB’s page on the test, the level of fee etc. [https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/bar-qualification-manual/part-2-for-students-pupils-transferring-lawyers/b3-the-bar-course-aptitude-test-bcat.html](https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/bar-qualification-manual/part-2-for-students-pupils-transferring-lawyers/b3-the-bar-course-aptitude-test-bcat.html)

**B3 The Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT)**

This section includes information on the Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT) including what the test involves, how to book a sitting, reasonable adjustments, extenuating circumstances, and complaints. This information is for applicants for the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), but applicants for new courses starting from September 2020 will also need to pass the BCAT and this information will be updated accordingly. More information can be found on our page on how Bar training is changing.

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Hello, if I am accepted for the BVC and fail to meet one of the criterion, would I have to re-apply the following year or can my admission be deferred?

Hi - it would depend on the exact circumstances but broadly speaking this would be possible.

Sean - Are you aware of how many resits they are and what does the aptitude test consist of

Please see the link I posted earlier to the BSB’s webpages on the test

Hello, my name is ______ Is the BCAT the aptitude test?

Hi ______, yes that's correct

If one fails aptitude test are they still considered based on academic and experiences?
As the aptitude test is set by the Bar Standards Board, it is an essential requirement of entry to Bar Training in general.

Do all the other universities require a BCAT too or is it just city?

Everywhere requires it as the course entry requirements are set by the Bar Standards Board.

And at what stage do you need to do the BCAT test? How much do you need achieve in order to pass?

Most students undertake the BCAT in the academic year before starting their Bar course but it may be done earlier as it is valid for 5 years. Please see the enclosed link for more information: https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/bar-qualification-manual/part-2-for-students-pupils--transferring-lawyers/b3-the-bar-course-aptitude-test-bcat.html

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Thanks Lisa

There are 10 minutes left of this chat session. Please post any further questions now.

Thank you Sean. I enquired about a different course for my son and his name has come up in this chat. I am Nancy.

What are the entry requirements? Do you accept a high 2:2?

Ordinarily we are looking for students with a 2:1 or on track for a 2:1 but we will consider a high 2:2 (usually an average of 57%) where the students shows ability to work at a 2:1 level across their degree.

I asked whether the referee could be a solicitor I had working experience with?
Yes, as I mentioned in one of my replies that will be fine if you can’t find 2 academic referees.

Do you have any thoughts as to whether work is possible or doable while undertaking the full-time 2-part BVS?

The Bar course is very demanding. I would not advise working full-time whilst trying to undertake your studies.

Can I use my ex-employer as a referee

Hi – Sean mentioned this above to another participant, that it is fine if you can't/don't have two academic referees.

Thank you all.

Perfect. Thank you

Hi, Lisa. Your reply appreciated. Thank you!

Are there any other questions that anyone has or may we have missed?

How do you choose an Inn? and at what stage do you need to do it?

You must be a member of an Inn by the summer before you commence your programme. Which Inn you chose is very much a matter of personal choice. They each have a lot of information on their websites, including what they offer their student members, and there are contact details for more information.

I don’t have any more. Thanks all for your responses.

Yes my question please. About the Inns

Just posted a reply to this please see above.

Thank you, all. An excellent session.

This was a really beneficial session indeed
Thank you all. Very helpful. Take care everyone.

Thank you so much Lisa

But we're on track for a 2:1

We can consider these - if you want a chat about your particular circumstances please send us an email at bspa@city.ac.uk

Thank you Lisa, Sean and Saralyn for clarifying the questions. Take care

Our pleasure. You look after yourself too

Thank you all. Very helpful. Take care everyone.

You too

Would we still be able to access the links in this session even when the session is over?

Hi - we can send a transcript, or often we add it to the website here - https://www.city.ac.uk/study/visit-us/online-events

**Online events**

Interested in finding out more about City, University of London’s courses but unable to attend our open days? Register now for one of our online events.

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Very helpful session - thank you everyone!

This session has now ended. Thank you for joining us for today's chat. If you have any questions, please email pgenquiries@city.ac.uk