

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION – POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES****KEY FACTS**

Programme name	Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC)
Award	LLM/Postgraduate Diploma in Bar Professional Training
School	The City Law School
Department or equivalent	Professional Programmes
Programme code	TBC
Type of study	Full Time / Part Time
Total UK credits	180
Total ECTS	90

**PROGRAMME SUMMARY**

The purpose of the Bar Professional Training Course (“BPTC”) is to enable you, building on your previous studies of the law, to acquire and develop the skills, knowledge and values you will need to become effective members of the Bar of England and Wales. The course acts as the bridge between the academic study of law at university and practising law with real clients in chambers or as an employed Barrister.

The qualities needed for a career at the Bar comprise a combination of integrity, honesty, courage, commitment, common sense, and perseverance. In addition, analytical skills, intellect, persuasiveness, organisational skills, good judgement, and language fluency are also required. The BPTC aims to nurture and develop these skills and attributes to a high level.

The course offers you two possible routes:

- 1) Postgraduate Diploma in Bar Professional Training (“The BPTC”)
 

If you successfully complete the compulsory taught element of the course (150 credits) you will be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma and be certified as having completed the Bar Professional Training Course. This is the compulsory vocational qualification required to be eligible to be Called to the Bar of England and Wales.
- 2) LLM in Bar Professional Training
 

You may choose to complete an additional 30 credit practice-focussed dissertation, following the compulsory taught element of the course, in order to achieve a Master’s Degree.

**The BPTC (Postgraduate Diploma – 150 credits)**

In keeping with its role in training students for the Bar, the BPTC concentrates on:

- (a) Advocacy training, to equip you for your work as an advocate at all levels of the courts and tribunals in England and Wales;

- (b) Advisory work, to equip you with the legal and interpersonal skills necessary for the purpose of providing legal advice to clients, both orally and in writing; and
- (c) Specialist drafting work, to equip you with the technical skills necessary to be able to draft a range of documents used in legal practice.

Barristers also need to be able to deal with a range of technical procedural and evidential issues in a court-room setting, where points often arise with very little warning. They also need to be able to advise on the full range of dispute resolution processes, and to act in accordance with the ethical standards laid down by the profession.

The taught part of the course (the BPTC) includes the following compulsory modules:

- Advocacy (Civil and Criminal, including witness handling and addressing the court)
- Opinion Writing
- Conference Skills
- Drafting
- Civil Litigation and Evidence
- Criminal Litigation, Sentencing and Evidence
- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Professional Ethics

Legal practice has become increasingly specialised over the years, You will also be required to undertake two elective modules from a range of specialist subject areas. You choose from a list of at least 10 options, which allows modules to be chosen from common law, crime, chancery and commercial areas of law, as well as live client pro bono work, so that the options can be matched to your preferred area of specialisation.

The overarching aims of the BPTC are:

- to prepare you for pupillage at the Bar of England and Wales;
- to enable students from overseas jurisdictions to acquire the skills required for pupillage at the Bar of England and Wales, thereby assisting them to undertake further training or practice in their home jurisdiction.

The BPTC helps you to develop the skills and knowledge needed for professional legal practice at the Bar of England and Wales. You will approach your studies from a range of different perspectives (civil, crime, specialist areas; claimant, prosecution, defendant; advocacy, advisory, theoretical) to broaden your expertise and skills. You will evaluate critically current practice and legal developments across a range of civil and criminal subjects, and you will develop your ability to provide appropriate critiques of professional skills performances using objective criteria. You will develop your ability to synthesise a range of legal, procedural, factual, evidential and ethical concepts and materials into a coherent case theory and strategy for conducting claims, disputes, defences and prosecutions on behalf of clients.

#### **The LLM (180 credits)**

You can develop your Bar Professional Training Course into a full LLM by undertaking an additional research-based dissertation module or clinical legal education project. The

City Law School delivers the BPTC at Master's level; the dissertation/project enables you to earn the same credit as a conventional Master's degree.

The Dissertation & Project modules build on what you have learnt on the BPTC. For the Dissertation you will be able to select an area of legal skills and/or knowledge from those covered on the BPTC within which to complete a dissertation and thereby further develop your legal knowledge and/or professional skill, and to demonstrate an ability to continue to advance your knowledge and understanding through independent research and reflective learning.

This LLM programme aims to enhance your ability to analyse, interpret and criticise substantive and adjectival law relevant to professional practice, and/or the skills required for professional legal practice. In particular, it will support you in:

- demonstrating initiative and personal responsibility in tackling and solving problems, working autonomously in planning and implementing a task at a professional level;
- enhancing your knowledge and understanding of substantive law, procedural and evidential rules, and skills relevant to professional legal practice;
- developing an integrated, analytical and reflective approach to legal practice;
- developing professional attitudes and working methods;
- developing a critical awareness of current legal problems or issues, developing insights informed by the forefront of legal practice;
- developing a conceptual and practical understanding of techniques of research and analysis of complex information;
- developing your ability to present conclusions clearly and persuasively.

Having chosen your topic, you will go on to devise a research question to form the title of your dissertation. From 2018-19, as an alternative to completing a dissertation, it will be possible to take the Clinical Legal Education module and submit a portfolio. This project comprises relevant training and supervised volunteering, and submission of a reflective journal of 7,500 – 10,000 words, as an alternative to completing the dissertation

The approach will involve critical examination of material, which will help you to develop insight and practice-related techniques. Your work will be expected to demonstrate a sound scholarly base, with critical analysis and practice-focussed insight.

### **WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?**

**On successful completion of the BPTC, you will be expected to be able to:**

#### Knowledge and understanding:

- demonstrate a systematic and detailed understanding of, and ability to apply and evaluate, the law and principles governing civil litigation, criminal litigation, evidence, sentencing and alternative dispute resolution

- formulate advice displaying a sound understanding of relevant legal knowledge and the principles governing litigation and evidence
- develop solutions for your clients, using sound legal knowledge and the application of professional legal skills
- evaluate the effective use of the skills applicable to practice at the Bar of England and Wales
- make use of legal knowledge in constructing legal arguments to advance the interests of the client
- demonstrate a complex and practical understanding of how legal research and enquiry techniques are used in professional practice

Skills:

construct reasoned legal arguments, and evaluate opposing arguments and assumptions

- develop your own original style in your professional work
- research technical and difficult points of law, and formulate legal principles in developing areas of law
- organise complex concepts and data in a structured and systematic way
- develop persuasive oral and written arguments using cogent legal and factual analysis, devising high-level reasoning to support your arguments
- make sound judgements on complex and nuanced issues
- demonstrate skill in identifying solutions to problems, and advising on the legal remedies available
- formulate claims for financial and other remedies
- communicate your conclusions clearly and concisely
- argue a case fluently and articulately
- collect and analyse relevant information
- act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level
- utilise and develop your knowledge of the principles underpinning legal professional practice

Values and attitudes:

- apply ethical principles to situations that arise in practice, including equality and diversity issues, and counsel's duties to the client and to the court
- abide by the principles of professional conduct in a wide range of legal contexts and situations
- develop professionally ethical answers to novel problems

**On successful completion of the LLM route you will, in addition, be expected to be able to:**

Knowledge and understanding:

- display an ability to synthesise and apply knowledge of a range of aspects of a distinct area of law and/or legal practice, including critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights at the forefront of current law;

- evaluate critically current research, advanced scholarship and practice in a selected area of law and/or practice.

**Skills:**

- undertake independent learning, demonstrating self-direction and originality in addressing problems or issues arising from the current state of the law and practice in the subject area studied;
- demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to research or advanced scholarship in relation to a selected area of professional practice.

**HOW WILL I LEARN?**

The BPTC

Modes of delivery are full-time one year or part-time two years with a significant blended learning element.

On the full-time BPTC you will typically have 12 to 14 hours of classes each week. You will also be expected to do about 26 to 28 hours of personal study each week. In an average week you will normally have three 90 minute lectures, and four or five small group classes. Most classes are timetabled between 10.30 am and 6 pm. Occasionally classes are timetabled for 9.00 am, and there are also some lectures between 6pm and 7pm which are taken by practitioners. You will have a regular study day with no classes each week.

On the part-time course teaching will take place on two evenings per week (either Monday & Wednesday or Tuesday & Thursday depending on the year in which you start the course), usually from 6pm – 9pm.

The compulsory modules run for the first 2 terms of the course (on the full-time course), with Advocacy and Conference skills continuing to the end of the third-term. The options run in the final term. On the Part-time course the compulsory subjects are covered in the first 5 terms, and the options are taught in the final term. There is a strict attendance requirement.

Teaching is divided into lectures, small group classes and advocacy classes. There are also some one-to-one advocacy sessions. Lectures are designed to give the necessary information for the small group work that will follow, and to provide general guidance on how to approach the different modules on the course. Classes are supported by a range of materials, including a series of skills and subject manuals which were written by senior members of staff and members of the practising Bar, and which are published by Oxford University Press. These manuals have been adopted by other Providers, and are widely recognised as leading and innovative texts on teaching legal skills. These Manuals, together with other supporting textbooks (which include relevant practitioner texts), are included in the course fees.

Most classes will be based on realistic case papers and factual scenarios, and much of your personal study time will focus on preparing answers, arguments, drafts, opinions or submissions for classes.

Small group classes are designed to support the skills and knowledge you will be developing. Litigation, Evidence, ADR and Ethics classes are based around case studies. You will work on these in advance of the class, which will then explore the issues raised and how you have applied the relevant principles. Classes also consider how to develop and construct arguments, organize material, how to assess what the court is likely to do, and how best to advise the client in the circumstances.

In skills classes the emphasis is on the performance of typical tasks undertaken by members of the Bar. You will be given guidance on how to give constructive comments on the performance of your peers, but the bulk of the feedback is given by your class tutors. They will be aiming to identify underlying issues in your performance, with guidance on how to improve, and you will be given opportunities to put the guidance into effect. In this way, you should find that you are able to make steady improvements on a week-by-week basis. As a result, by the time you reach the later stages of the course, you should be able to put in polished performances, and will be able to receive guidance on tactical and other advanced points which will assist you in developing effective arguments and in formulating sound, practical advice for your clients.

Course materials are based on realistic papers, and which are designed to enable you to see how cases develop in both criminal and civil practice. Just as happens in real life, you meet these cases at various points as they progress through the stages of court proceedings. Also, the facts and evidence, and the overall complexion of the case, may change as further evidence is obtained and responses are filed by the other side. While legal research and a sound application of the law remain of crucial importance, the emphasis is on the practical application of the law to the facts of the particular case.

Options in the final part of the programme are designed to enable you to continue your development of the core skills in specialist areas. This means the skills used on the options modules are developed to a higher level, and in the context of more complex and advanced cases.

The programme:

- provides you with opportunities for learning by doing, and requires you to apply your knowledge in practical work
- requires you to play an active role in the course and to take responsibility for your own learning
- requires you to reflect on your own learning
- seeks to inculcate a professional approach to work and to develop your respect for the principles of professional ethics, and
- seeks to provide you with an informed view of a barrister's working life.

#### The LLM

The dissertation/project modules will support you further in achieving high standards in entering the legal profession. As is appropriate at this level, there is a strong emphasis on independent work in carrying out research, analysis and writing up.

During the first term of the BPTC, you will be asked to select a topic for your

dissertation (from a list provided by the School). The main work on your dissertation will normally be done when your BPTC modules end.

We will provide you with an induction covering research and writing skills, and also online support, to assist you with research and analysis methods, structure for the dissertation, writing up the results of your research, referencing sources etc. You will also receive one-to-one supervision. We provide you with a clear structure for supervision, and you will agree with your supervisor the timeline for planning, research, analysis and completion of your dissertation. You will be expected to submit your dissertation in the September following the end of BPTC teaching, g. There is an emphasis on steady and sustained progress. Your supervisor will be able to give you feedback on proposals for the structure of your dissertation, draft chapters etc. You will also be able to make use of our excellent library support for guidance on developing your literature search and other aspects of research techniques.

From 2018-19, there will be the alternative of completing the Clinical legal Education module. You will be asked to select an area of pro-bono work, undergo relevant training, and perform appropriate tasks in relation to advising real clients. This will include carrying out relevant research and analysis. You will be asked to submit a portfolio summarising and reflecting on what you have done. Support will be provided by training, by the relevant pro bono organisation, and/or by a member of School staff, with the detail depending on the area selected.

## **WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?**

### Assessments

The BPTC is assessed by 12 summative (final) assessments, each of which is designed to suit the skill or subject being assessed. These are also known as the professional assessments.

Nine of the professional assessments are set by City Law School, with the papers being approved by an External Examiner appointed both by the Bar Standards Board and City Law School. These assessments are as follows (see below for detail):-

- Advocacy Examination-in-Chief – a filmed performance
- Advocacy Cross-Examination – a filmed performance
- Advocacy: Submissions – a filmed performance
- Opinion Writing – an unseen written examination
- Drafting – an unseen written examination
- Conference Skills – a filmed performance
- Two Optional Subjects – for each a seen coursework assessment
- Alternative Dispute Resolution – a combined MCQ/SAQ Test

### Centrally Set Assessments

The remaining three professional assessments are centrally set and marked by the Bar Standards Board. This means that all students studying the BPTC at the various

Providers throughout the country do the same assessment at the same time. These are the assessments in:-

- Civil Litigation and Evidence;
- Criminal Litigation, Sentencing and Evidence; and
- Professional Ethics.

The Civil Litigation and Criminal Litigation assessments are Single Best Answer papers. The Professional Ethics assessment takes the form of 6 Short Answer Questions.

### Skills Assessments

There are three Advocacy assessments on the BPTC. Two are witness handling assessments, one in examination-in-chief and the other in cross-examination. You will be provided with your Brief a few days before the assessment, and you will need to prepare as if you were dealing with the case in court. Actors will play the role of the witness. You can bring a wide range of materials into the assessments, including your notes for examining the witness. Your performance is for a set period of time, and is recorded.

The third Advocacy assessment is a submission to a judge. You receive your Brief some days before the initial hand-in date, at which point you need to hand-in a written skeleton argument. Some days later you will have an appointment where you will make a time-limited submission to an assessor taking the part of the judge. You will be expected to use your skeleton argument and any authorities you want to rely upon, and the "judge" will intervene to ask you questions in the same way as a judge would do at court.

Opinion Writing and Drafting assessments take the form of written assessments under examination conditions. You will be given information on the areas of law relevant to the assessment a few days in advance of the exam. This is to allow you to do the necessary legal research. Both assessments are 'open book', and you are permitted to bring a wide range of materials with you to these two assessments, including your research notes into the background law. You will see the papers from your "instructing solicitor" for the first time in the exam hall.

The Conference Skills assessment takes the form of a time-limited filmed performance, with an actor taking the role of your client. You will be provided with your papers a number of days in advance of the assessment. You are permitted to bring a wide range of materials into the assessment, including your research notes and your conference plan for this conference.

Options assessments (other than for the three "clinical" options) can take place as Opinion Writing and/or Drafting and/or Advocacy and/or Conference assessments, but unlike the main skills assessments are coursework rather than examinations. You will be given your papers some days in advance of the hand-in date. You will be expected to work on your own, do the necessary legal research, and complete the required Opinion, Draft, Advocacy (which may include a skeleton argument) or Conference.

Three of the options (the "Clinical Options": Domestic Violence, Free Representation Unit (Employment Law) and Free Representation Unit (Social Security)) are real client

pro bono options. The assessments for these options take the form of files you produce detailing the work you have done for your clients. They are not marked on the basis of how successful you might have been in the actual cases, but on the standard of the work you have done. These options include training provided by or in conjunction with the relevant Pro Bono organisation, which starts in the first term of the programme.

#### ADR Assessment

The ADR assessment is a combined Multiple Choice Question and Short Answer Question (MCQ/SAQ) Test.

#### Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria are descriptions, based on the intended learning outcomes, of the skills and abilities that you need to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully. They provide a mechanism by which the standard students reach in a skills assessment can be measured. Typically, each skill will be broken down into approximately five Assessment Criteria, each one being an essential component of a good performance in the relevant skill. A stated number of marks is allocated to each Assessment Criterion.

Grade Descriptors describe the level of skills, knowledge or abilities that you need to demonstrate in order to achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment. They provide a mechanism by which your performance in an assessment can be measured and placed within the overall set of marks.

Your performance in a skills assessment will be marked against each of the Assessment Criteria, based on how your performance measures against the Grade Descriptors. In other words, the Assessment Criteria are the marking scheme, and the Grade Descriptors provide the measure for how many marks you will achieve on each of the Assessment Criteria.

Assessment Criteria for each of the skills and the Grade Descriptors will be made available to you from the beginning of the course in the Assessment Handbook.

#### The Dissertation/Project

If you choose to complete the LLM you will also be required to complete a 30 credit research based dissertation (7,500-10,000 words in length) or a portfolio of similar length, summarising and reflecting on pro bono work completed.

Assessment Criteria and Grade Descriptors for the portfolio will be made available in the Assessment Handbook.

#### Feedback

You will be given regular feedback in your skills classes. This happens on a weekly basis. Feedback will typically be based on the Assessment Criteria, and is aimed at assisting you to improve your future performances.

Certain exercises are designated as “formal feedback” sessions. These are treated in much the same way as mock exams, and you will be given a grade for your performance measured against the formal assessment criteria, together with written feedback on your work. There are designated times where your marked work will be returned to you.

If you happen to fail a formal skills or option assessment or the dissertation (if you are on the LLM) you will receive written criteria-based feedback on your performance which will explain the weaknesses in the performance and provide guidance on what is needed to improve. In addition, you are entitled to a one-hour feedback and guidance appointment with a tutor for each assessment that has to be re-sat.

#### Assessment Regulations

##### *(a) Postgraduate Diploma in Bar Professional Training*

In order to be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma and be certified as having completed the BPTC for the purpose of Call to the Bar, you must successfully complete all of the professional assessments and satisfy the attendance requirement.

The Pass mark for each professional assessment is 60%.

Further, in order to pass the skills assessments (including the Option subjects) you must both achieve the pass mark and demonstrate adequate knowledge and comprehension of the law and procedure and compliance with the principles of professional ethics to avoid any error or conduct which would:-

- (i) put the client's interest at risk or
- (ii) put you at risk of liability for negligence or a disciplinary finding

If you fail a professional assessment, you will be offered two resit attempts. (Please note that this rule applies only to those commencing the course in 2016/17 or undertaking the second year of the part-time course in 2016/17. Resitting students from previous years are only permitted one resit attempt.)

If you are successful in a BPTC resit, you are limited to the minimum number of marks required to pass that assessment (60%), which means you will be graded as Competent for that assessment.

##### *(b) LLM in Bar Professional Training*

In order to pass the LLM you must successfully complete the twelve professional assessments and the Dissertation/Project and satisfy the BPTC attendance requirement.

The pass mark for the Dissertation/Project module is 50%. If you fail this module you will be entitled to one opportunity to resubmit. If you are successful on the resubmission you will be awarded the minimum pass mark (50%).

#### **WHAT AWARD CAN I GET?**

##### **Postgraduate Diploma (BPTC):**

Part	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)
BPTC	7	150	100

If you are certified as having successfully completed the Postgraduate Diploma you will be graded as follows:

Outstanding

To be classified as Outstanding you must have:

- i) passed all twelve professional assessments at the first attempt; and
- ii) either obtained at least 6 grades of Outstanding in the professional assessments or obtained an overall mark of 85% or above in the twelve professional assessments.

Very Competent

To be classified as Very Competent you must have:

- i) passed at the first attempt at least eleven of the twelve professional assessments; and
- ii) either obtained at least 8 grades of Very Competent or Outstanding in the professional assessments or obtained an overall mark of 70% or above in the twelve professional assessments.

Competent

All students who are certified as having successfully completed the Postgraduate Diploma, but do not meet the criteria set out above to be classified as Outstanding or Very Competent, will be graded as Competent.

If you are taking the LLM, you will get a separate classification for the BPTC once you have met the requirement to pass the Postgraduate Diploma but will not be awarded the Diploma unless you do not meet the requirements to pass the LLM.

**Master's Degree**

Programme Stage	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)	Class	% required
BPTC	7	150	83.3%	Distinction	70%
Dissertation/Project	7	30	16.7%	Commendation	60%
				Pass	50%

If you are certified as having successfully completed the LLM you will be graded as follows:

Distinction

To be classified as Distinction you must have passed the Dissertation at the first attempt and either obtained at least 7 grades of Outstanding in the professional assessments, or at least 6 grades of Outstanding in the professional assessments and a Distinction grade in the Dissertation/Project.

Very Competent

To be classified as Very Competent you must have passed the Dissertation at the first attempt and obtained at least 9 grades of Very Competent or Outstanding in the professional assessments, or at least 8 grades of Very Competent or Outstanding in the professional assessments and a Commendation or Distinction grade in the Dissertation/Project.

Pass

All students who are certified as having successfully completed the LLM, but do not

meet the criteria set out above to be classified as Distinction or Commendation, will be graded as Pass.

### WHAT WILL I STUDY?

To be certified as completing the BPTC and be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma you will be required to complete 10 compulsory modules and 2 elective (optional) modules.

Module Title	SITS Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Can be Compensated?	Level
Advocacy Cross Examination	LBM301	10	C	N	7
Advocacy Examination in Chief	LBM302	10	C	N	7
Advocacy Addressing the Court	LBM303	10	C	N	7
Civil Litigation & Evidence	LBM314	15	C	N	7
Conference Skills	LBM315	10	C	N	7
Criminal Litigation, Evidence & Sentencing	LBM316	15	C	N	7
Resolution of Disputes out of Court (ADR)	LBM317	10	C	N	7
Drafting Skills	LBM318	15	C	N	7
Professional Ethics	LBM319	10	C	N	7
Opinion Writing Skills	LBM320	15	C	N	7
Advanced Criminal Litigation	LBM421	15	E	N	7
Commercial Law	LBM422	15	E	N	7
Company Law	LBM423	15	E	N	7
Domestic Violence	LBM424	15	E	N	7
Employment Law	LBM425	15	E	N	7
Family Law	LBM427	15	E	N	7
Fraud & Economic Crime	LBM428	15	E	N	7
Free Representation Unit: Employment Law	LBM429	15	E	N	7
Landlord & Tenant	LBM432	15	E	N	7
Professional Negligence	LBM433	15	E	N	7
Free Representation Unit: Social Security	LBM435	15	E	N	7

If you choose to complete the LLM you will need to complete an additional module. You are not normally required to complete the BPTC successfully before progressing to the dissertation/project.

Module Title	SITS Code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
Dissertation	LBM500	30	E	N	7
<u>Clinical Legal Education Project</u>	LBM501	<u>30</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>7</u>

### TO WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ON?

The primary purpose of the BPTC is to enable you to progress to pupillage and thereafter to a career as a Barrister. Competition for pupillages is intense.

Other possible careers might include:-

- Employed lawyers
- Government Legal Service
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Local Government lawyers
- Regulators
- Transfer to the Solicitors' profession
- Academic lawyers
- Legal publishing
- Finance industry and banking
- Commerce and business

#### Pupillage Advisory Service

The CLS runs a Pupillage Advisory Service during term time which is staffed by members of the teaching team, many of whom have experience of pupillage selection from their time in chambers. The service offers a wide range of opportunities, from curriculum vitae advice, to panel events with speakers from a range of chambers, to mock interviews.

#### LLM

You will find completing the LLM of help to you in a number of different careers. The focus on a particular area of legal practice will stand you in good stead to apply for pupillage or employment in that particular field. The fact that you have undertaken independent research and written a 7,500 – 10,000 word dissertation will be evidence of your research and writing skills. It may also provide you with the basis for later doctoral research and an academic career.

If you would like more information on the Careers support available at City, please go to: <http://www.city.ac.uk/careers/for-students-and-recent-graduates>.

### WILL I GET ANY PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION?

**Accrediting Body:** Bar Standards Board (for the BPTC)

#### **Nature of Accreditation**

The accreditation arrangements are set out in the Bar Standards Board's Bar Professional Training Course - Course Specification Requirements and Guidance.

Accreditation of the programme by the BSB is by submission of an application with supporting documentation and evidence, together with validation visits and/or meetings conducted by the Bar Standards Board. Monitoring is through annual reporting; a number of the BPTC assessments being set and marked centrally by the Bar Standards Board; and approval of results by External Examiners appointed by the Bar Standards

Board.

### HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?

This is a postgraduate course with minimum entry requirements prescribed by the Bar Standards Board.

Most applicants should have a UK honours degree in law, normally with a minimum standard upper second-class award. However, it is possible to apply with a degree in another subject and a further qualification in law, such as the Common Professional Examination, the Graduate Diploma in Law, or the Graduate Entry LLB. [The Bar Standards Board](#) can advise on non-standard qualifications.

In addition, you must:

(a) be able to demonstrate English language proficiency equivalent to a minimum score of 7.5 in each section of the IELTS academic test or a minimum score of 73 in each section of the Pearson Test of English;

(b) pass the Bar Course Aptitude Test set by the Bar Standards Board;

(c) have applied for Inns membership no later than 31 May in the year you enrol on the programme. By the time of enrolment on the BPTC you must be a member of one of the Inns of Court.

There is a central application process and you must apply online (<https://www.barsas.com/>).

Applications open in November each year and the closing date for the first round is in early January. If you miss the first round application deadline, it is possible to apply in the late round at any stage from January until the end of August. However, you should note that late round applications are only considered once all first round applications have been considered, so late round applicants run the risk that the course may fill up.

In reaching selection decisions, we will take account of the following:

- Degree performance (actual or predicted)
- Evidence of intellectual ability
- Interpersonal skills
- Advocacy and public speaking skills
- Personal organisational skills
- Your references.

Offers will be for both the BPTC and the LLM; you will be required to select which route you intend to study when you accept your offer.

UK applicants should be aware that if you take the LLM route you will be eligible to apply

for a government backed postgraduate loan, see <https://www.gov.uk/postgraduate-loan/overview>. The BPTC alone is not eligible for this funding. Students who obtain such a loan will need to complete the full programme (they will not be able switch to the BPTC route) or else may breach the terms of their loan agreement.

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