PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION – POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

KEY FACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme name</th>
<th>Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Award</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>The City Law School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department or equivalent</td>
<td>Professional Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme code</td>
<td>LAPDBPT01 (Route code: PSBPTC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of study</td>
<td>Full Time, Part Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total UK credits</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ECTS</td>
<td>60</td>
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</table>

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.

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.

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 advocates 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 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. On the BPTC therefore you will also have compulsory modules dealing with:

(a) Civil Litigation and Evidence;
(b) Criminal Litigation, Sentencing and Evidence;
(c) Alternative Dispute Resolution (“ADR”); and
(d) Professional Ethics.
Legal practice has become increasingly specialised over the years, and you can also take two optional subjects. 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.

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 have three 90 minute lectures, and 5 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, and we try to timetable classes to create a second study day if this is possible.

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.

Study leave, reading weeks, and holidays at Christmas and Easter are incorporated into the teaching programme. The teaching year is from September to the end of May the following year.

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 also run in the final six teaching weeks. On the Part-time mode the compulsory subjects are covered in the first 5 terms, and the options are taught in the last six teaching weeks. Both modes have an attendance requirement.

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

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.

For all of you completing the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Legal Skills in addition to the above you will 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 and prosecutions on behalf of clients.
WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

On successful completion of this programme, you will be expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding:
• demonstrate a systematic understanding of 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
• discuss how legal research techniques are used to develop and interpret the law

Skills:
• construct reasoned legal arguments
• develop your own original style in your professional work
• evaluate opposing arguments and assumptions
• research technical and difficult points of law
• research 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
• devise high level reasoning to support your arguments
• make sound judgments on complex and nuanced issues
• demonstrate skill in identifying solutions to problems
• advise 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
• evaluate current developments and advanced theory dealing with law and legal practice
• act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level
• assess and manage cases without supervision
• utilise and develop your knowledge of the principles underpinning legal professional practice
• continue to advance your knowledge and develop new skills to a high level
• undertake case analysis, research, conferences, opinion writing, drafting, dispute resolution and advocacy without supervision
Values and attitudes:
- explore ethical principles in law and 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

HOW WILL I LEARN?

The compulsory modules cover:

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

Teaching is divided into lectures (with about 130 students), small group classes (normally 12 students) and advocacy classes (normally 6 students). There are also 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. They 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.

The programme is supported by a wide range of written and electronic resources.

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 will 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 will be able to put in polished performances, and will be able to receive guidance on tactical and advanced points which will assist you in developing effective arguments and in formulating sound, practical advice for your clients.

Course materials are centred on a relatively small number of cases, which are based on realistic papers, and which are designed to enable you to see how cases develop in both crime and civil practice. Just as happens in real life, you meet these cases at various points as they progress through the various 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.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

Assessments

The course is assessed by 12 summative (final) assessments, each of which is designed to suit the skill or subject being assessed.

Nine of the final 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:-

- 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

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. You will be notified when you receive your papers which witness you will be examining. 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 examiner 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 exams are open book exams, 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 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 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.

Clinical Assessments
Three of the options, Domestic Violence, Free Representation Unit (Employment Law) and Social Security are real client pro bono options. These assessments 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
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 are allocated to each Assessment Criterion.

Grade Descriptors are laid down by the Bar Standards Board to describe the level of skills, knowledge or abilities that you need to demonstrate in order 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 the 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 centrally set Grade Descriptors will be made available to you from the beginning of the course in the CLS BPTC Assessment Handbook.

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

Centrally Set Assessments
The remaining three final assessments are centrally set 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.

Purpose of BPTC Assessments
The purpose of assessment on the BPTC is to allow you to demonstrate that you have fulfilled the programme objectives and achieved the standard required for the award. Assessment will be carried out in a clear, precise and reliable way, and with rigour and fairness. Each module within the BPTC has its own assessment criteria or marking scheme. You will be informed at the commencement of the programme of the material covered in each module and its assessment requirements, including weightings.
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 timetabled sessions where your marked work will be returned to you.

If you happen to fail a formal skills or option assessment 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, for all assessments 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
In order to pass the course, you must successfully complete all of the assessments and satisfy the attendance requirement.

The Pass mark for each 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
(iii) put you at risk of action for professional misconduct by the BSB.

If you fail an 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 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.

WHAT AWARD CAN I GET?

Postgraduate Diploma:

<table>
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<th>Part</th>
<th>HE Level</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Weighting (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100</td>
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If you are certified as having successfully completed the course you will be graded as follows:

**Outstanding**
To be classified as Outstanding you must have:
i) passed all twelve assessments at the first attempt; and
ii) either obtained at least 6 grades of Outstanding in the formal assessment process or obtained an overall mark of 85% or above in the formal assessment process.

**Very Competent**
To be classified as Very Competent you must have:
i) passed at the first attempt at least eleven of the twelve assessments; and
ii) either obtained at least 8 grades of Very Competent or Outstanding in the formal assessment process or obtained an overall mark of 70% or above in the formal assessment process.

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

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**WHAT WILL I STUDY?**

You will be required to complete 10 compulsory modules and 2 elective (optional) modules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>SITS Code</th>
<th>Module Credits</th>
<th>Core/ Elective</th>
<th>Can be Compensated?</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<td>Advocacy Cross Examination</td>
<td>LBM301</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Advocacy Examination in Chief</td>
<td>LBM302</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Advocacy Addressing the Court</td>
<td>LBM303</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Civil Litigation &amp; Evidence</td>
<td>LBM304</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Conference Skills</td>
<td>LBM305</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>Criminal Litigation, Evidence &amp; Sentencing</td>
<td>LBM306</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Resolution of Disputes out of Court (ADR)</td>
<td>LBM307</td>
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<td>Drafting Skills</td>
<td>LBM308</td>
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<td>Professional Ethics</td>
<td>LBM309</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>Opinion Writing Skills</td>
<td>LBM310</td>
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<td>Advanced Criminal Litigation</td>
<td>LBM401</td>
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<td>LBM402</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>LBM403</td>
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<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>LBM404</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Law</td>
<td>LBM405</td>
<td>12</td>
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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 careers 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 which is staffed by members of the teaching staff with experience of pupillage selection from their time in chambers. This offers a wide range of opportunities, from curriculum vitae advice to panel events with speakers from a range of chambers to mock interviews.

BPTC-LLM
Once you are enrolled on the BPTC it is possible to apply separately for the LLM in Professional Legal Skills, a separate course which enables you to convert the Postgraduate Diploma which you receive on successful completion of the BPTC to a Masters Degree by writing a Dissertation.

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](http://www.city.ac.uk/careers/for-students-and-recent-graduates).

WILL I GET ANY PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION?

Accrediting Body: Bar Standards Board

Nature of Accreditation

The accreditation arrangements are set out in the Bar Standards Board's Bar
Accreditation - and monitoring - is by submission of an application with supporting documentation and evidence, together with validation visits and/or meetings conducted by the Bar Standards Board.

HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?

The BPTC is a postgraduate course with entry requirements prescribed by the Bar Standards Board.

You will have a UK honours degree in law. Normally a strong second-class degree is the minimum standard required. However, it is possible to apply with a degree in another subject and a further qualification in law, such as the Graduate Diploma in Law.

You must also 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.

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

There is a central application process for the BPTC and you must apply online. Applications open in early 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 to April and a further round 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 considering your application, we will take the following into account: degree performance (actual or predicted) and other academic qualifications, evidence of intellectual ability, interpersonal skills, advocacy and public speaking experience, professional experience, personal organisational skills, and the references provided by your referees.