

Bar Standards Board

4 March 2019

Arrangements for the transitional period between the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and the introduction of new Bar training pathways

The Bar Standards Board has undertaken a major review of training for the Bar through its Future Bar Training programme which commenced in 2014. The changes resulting from the review will start to be implemented from Spring 2019, following approval by the Legal Services Board in February 2019 of the new rules that enable change.

Existing providers of the Bar Professional Training Course will take enrolments for the last time in September 2019 for full-time and, where offered, part-time courses and MLaw courses commencing in academic year 2019-20.

From Spring 2019, any organisation wishing to deliver Bar training after the last BPTC enrolments will be able to apply to become an Authorised Education and Training Organisation to offer one of the new approved pathways to Bar qualification which will replace the BPTC.

This statement sets out how **all students** will be affected – those already enrolled on a BPTC, those applying for a place on a BPTC to commence in September 2019, and those who intend to apply to train for the Bar on one of the new approved pathways that will replace the BPTC.

It is very important that all students read this and understand how they are affected. We have asked all current BPTC providers to include this information with offer letters to all students that they make an offer to, and to include it on their websites. We have also asked all BPTC providers to write to all students who are currently enrolled but who have not yet completed, or who are exams-only students. It is the responsibility of all students to read and understand what the changes may mean for them.

Students who enrol on a BPTC (full-time, part-time, or MLaw) commencing in September 2019 and students who are currently already enrolled on a BPTC (full-time, part-time or MLaw) but who have not yet completed, or who have enrolled in previous years and are exams-only students

Opportunities to complete your BPTC under current centralised examination board arrangements for assessment of Civil Litigation and Professional Ethics (as set out in the current BPTC Handbook) will be subject to transitional arrangements concluding with the Spring sit of 2022. After that (ie from the Summer sit of 2022 onwards) new arrangements will apply.

Centralised examination in Criminal Litigation is not affected.

Assessments between Spring 2020 and Spring 2022

- *Civil Litigation*

Assessments under the current centralised examination board arrangements will be set in:

- Spring 2020
- Summer 2020
- Spring 2021
- Summer 2021

- Spring 2022
- *Professional Ethics*
Assessments under the current centralised examination board arrangements will be set in:
 - Spring 2020
 - Summer 2020
 - Spring 2021

Assessments set by course providers will be set in:

- Summer 2021
- Spring 2022

BPTC students with assessments still to pass after Spring 2022

From Summer 2022 if you have not successfully completed the relevant components for whatever reason, including where mitigating circumstances apply as determined by your course provider, you will be affected in the following ways:

- you will need to take the new format of centralised assessment for Civil Litigation which will incorporate dispute resolution (formerly a subject area examined by providers) ie it will contain two new syllabus areas: Alternative Dispute Resolution: Adjudicative options, and Alternative Dispute Resolution: Non-Adjudicative Options. There will be no exemption possible if you have already taken and passed a provider-set assessment in Resolution of Disputes out of Court;
- you will need to take the new form of vocational component Professional Ethics examination which will be set by your provider. This will assess the knowledge and understanding of Professional Ethics required for Call to the Bar;
- should you go on to pupillage/work-based learning you will need to take the new centralised examination in Professional Ethics during pupillage. This will build upon the knowledge and understanding of Professional Ethics covered during the vocational component and will benefit from the assessment taking place in the context of real-life practice;
- the form of the centralised examination in Criminal Litigation will not change.

Students who intend to apply to train for the Bar on one of the new approved pathways that will replace the BPTC*

- You will undertake the forms of assessment designed specifically for the new pathways.
- The time of year which you sit your exams will be determined by which pathway your Authorised Education and Training Organisation offers.
- You will have five years from the date of enrolment in which to complete all assessments successfully. The BSB does not place a cap on the number of resits you can take, but your Authorised Education and Training Organisation may stipulate a maximum number of attempts for any academic award associated with the Bar training qualification, in accordance with their institutional regulations. No extension of time is possible after five years have elapsed, under any circumstances.
- If you go on to pupillage/work-based learning you will need to take a centralised assessment in Professional Ethics during pupillage which will build on a foundation

*NB as at 1 March 2019, the Legal Services Board has only just approved the rules that will enable change, so no Education and Training Organisations have yet been authorised to deliver approved pathways. Authorisations will commence from Spring 2019 in time for new courses to be available from 2020.

assessment set by your Authorised Education and Training Organisation during the vocational component.

Bar Transfer Test candidates

- The next sittings of the Bar Transfer test are in Spring and Summer 2019. Details of what will change for Bar Transfer candidates in the future will be published on our website in the coming weeks.

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