

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

For those wishing to study for the Bar of England and Wales

If you are seriously thinking of pursuing a career at the Bar then you need to be aware of its competitive nature. The Bar can offer a rewarding career if you

- i have a high level of intellectual ability;
- i are highly articulate in written and spoken English; and
- i can think and communicate under pressure

Before you embark on this, we would advise you to think carefully about:

- i Whether you have the potential to make a successful career as a barrister.
- i Whether you can meet the high standards of intellectual ability, personal stamina and emotional energy that are expected, as a career at the Bar is very demanding.
- i Whether you have the potential to develop your knowledge and skills further.

You should also consider some of the 'facts and figures' concerning a career at the Bar before you commit yourself. Information is available about the number of students who take the Bar Course each year and the availability of pupillages. YOU MUST RESEARCH IT. You are also strongly advised to:

- i Read the booklet 'It's Your Call'. In brief, approximately 1800 students take the Bar Course every year and the number of pupillages offered is about 550 each year. The qualification on passing the Bar Course is stale after five years.
- i Plan your finances. The course, living expenses and the first years at the Bar can be expensive. The Inns of Court offer scholarships. The majority of scholarship winners obtain pupillage. You must apply early. Some banks provide special loans.
- i Check the BSB Website. <http://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/news/statistics/>.
- i Check the Providers of the Bar Course who also publish their own statistics. Details of the costs of the course at each provider are also given on their websites.
- i Check with one of the Inns of Court if criminal, medical or past disciplinary problems might affect your ability to practise

Finding a tenancy in Chambers or a suitable position at the Employed Bar can also be very challenging. Each year there are normally fewer tenancies available than pupillages.

Be aware that you also need to meet the formal entry requirements before you start the course: a second class honours degree in law (or in another subject plus a conversion course), Inn membership, adequate language skills and passing the new Bar Aptitude Test (which it is expected will be introduced for those applying to start the course in 2013). Few who have a 2:2 degree obtain pupillage. You should find out as much as you can and give the information serious consideration before committing yourself to the study for the Bar.

Make a realistic assessment of whether you are suited to a career as a barrister; you should:

- i Seek guidance from your university law tutors and careers advisers
- i Go to the Inns and speak to their Education staff (they organise open days for university students)
- i Find out more about the profession and look at the statistical information
- i Try to gain relevant experience such as working for a law firm and doing mini pupillages
- i Try to talk to people who have studied for the Bar, for example to a recently qualified barrister.

If you have faith in yourself, your capabilities and your potential to succeed after hard work and effort this should not discourage you. The Bar can provide a long and rewarding career.

Helpful advice

You will find helpful advice on the following websites:

The Bar Council (www.barcouncil.org.uk),

The Bar Standards Board (www.barstandardsboard.org.uk),

Lincoln's Inn (www.lincolnsinn.org.uk,

Inner Temple (www.innertemple.org.uk),

Middle Temple (www.middletemple.org.uk),

Gray's Inn (www.graysinn.org.uk)

BPP Law School, London and Leeds (www.bpp.com)

City University, London (www.city.ac.uk)

The College of Law, London and Birmingham (www.college-of-law.co.uk)

Cardiff Law School (www.cf.ac.uk)

Manchester Metropolitan University (www.law.mmu.ac.uk)

University of Northumbria, Newcastle (www.law.unn.ac.uk)

Nottingham Law School (www.nls.ac.uk)

University of the West of England, Bristol (www.uwe.ac.uk)

Kaplan Law School (www.kaplanlawschool.org.uk)

This notice is issued jointly by the Bar Council and the four Inns of Court.