

How to apply to train to be a barrister

Bar Student Application System (BarSAS)

A short user guide for applicants

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1. What is BarSAS?

- a) Anyone wishing to train for the Bar of England and Wales must complete the 'Bar Professional Training Course' (BPTC). Applications for the BPTC are ALL processed through this single service, the 'BarSAS' service, which stands for the 'Bar Students Application Service'. A shorter form of the BPTC is available to practicing lawyers who wish to convert to the Bar, but this programme is run entirely separately and cannot be applied for using the BarSAS.
- b) The website for BarSAS is <https://www.BarSAS.com>
- c) You can contact each Provider to discuss their programme(s), but *no applications can be received by a Provider of the BPTC directly from an applicant.*
- d) This site is run by the Providers and NOT by the BSB. The BSB will not be able to assist with technical questions, or give any other advice, save for questions about the 'academic stage' – i.e. the sufficiency of the law degree or GDL that you have.

2. Making an application

- a) Applicants for the BPTC can normally start applying from early December in the year before they seek to undertake the BPTC. The system runs until the start of the academic year in September. The full timetable is available at the end of this guide.
- b) Students can apply through BARASAS for up to 6 programmes. There are 22 in all to choose from (currently), across the 8 Providers of the BPTC. Full Time and Part Time modes are available. Please note that making an application is not a guarantee of acceptance onto a BPTC programme.
- c) Providers consider applications in two rounds. Applications submitted prior to the first round closing date will have their first 3 preferences considered in the first round. Applicants who have not received an offer from their first three preferences in the first round will have

their fourth, fifth and sixth preferences considered in the second round. Applications submitted after the first round closing date will be considered in the second round by all 6 Providers selected.

- d) The application system will not allow the applicant to submit the application form if the compulsory questions are not completed.
- e) Entry onto the BPTC is regulated by the Bar Standards Board. The Bar Standards Board is the body that will ensure that an applicant satisfactorily completed the Academic Stage of Training for The Bar before commencing the BPTC. The entry requirements set by the Providers is in addition to the requirement to have satisfactorily completed the Academic Stage of Training for The Bar as defined by the Bar Standards Board. The BARSAS system will ask applicants the questions required to determine satisfactory completion of the Academic Stage of Training for The Bar, and where there is a question over an applicant's status, the BARSAS system will indicate to the applicant what he or she needs to do. The regulator's rules on the requirements of the academic stage of training can be found at <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/qualifying-as-a-barrister/academic-stage/>.
- f) Providers can see where applicants have placed them but they are unable to see the other Providers the applicant has selected.
- g) There is a single sum payable in order to submit an application.
- h) The application form includes a number of questions about your heritage background and beliefs. This data is for use by the regulator in monitoring access to the profession and is not gathered in order to assess your application.

3. References in support of the application

- a) There is no official deadline for the submission of references however applicants should advise their referees to submit their references as soon as possible.
- b) If a reference has not been received two weeks after the applicant has submitted their application, an automated email will be sent to the nominated referees. Applicants are still encouraged to check on the status of their application and see if both references have been supplied.
- c) If an applicant has continued problems securing a reference, the referee can be replaced with an alternative, using the 'add referee' section of the form.
- d) Academic references are preferable to personal references and at least one must be academic.

4. Changing a submitted application

- a) Once an application has been submitted the only details which can be changed are an applicant's contact details.
- b) An additional referee can be supplied in the event that an original referee fails to provide a reference.
- c) The system allows applicants to add documentary proof to their applications at any time, and applicants will be expected to upload proof of Inns membership etc prior to registration with a Provider.

- d) If applicants have any other significant or important information that was not presented on the application form, then applicants will need to contact the Providers selected in order to let the Provider know of this additional or changed information.
- e) In the event that an applicant has a change in circumstances, and finds that he/she wishes to be considered by a Provider other than the 6 selected, and the form is already submitted, the entire application must be withdrawn by the applicant, who can then make and pay for a new application.

5. Receiving and selecting an offer

- a) First round offers are released in March, according to the BPTC timetable. All offers will have an expiry date. An expiry date for an offer will be given with the offer. You may wish to wait to see if other Providers make you an offer as some offers are not made immediately. You are therefore advised to consider using all the decision time available.
- b) After the expiry date made on the offer, the Provider making the offer has the right to retract an offer. If you wish to have more time to consider an offer, please contact the Provider making the offer and make the request.
- c) Applicants may accept one offer only. Once you have accepted an offer the system will automatically withdraw you from the other Providers that you might have selected. You should not then be contacted by any of the other Providers.
- d) It is possible that an applicant is neither rejected nor made an offer by a Provider. Providers are not compelled to determine an application either way, and may simply keep an application indefinitely under review. This enables a Provider to make a late offer if places become available after the system closes. If an applicant has received no response to an application, the applicant should contact the Provider to ask for a review or an indication of likely progress.
- e) The date the BarSAS system closes is the last date for all processing. BPTC applicants will not be able to commence the course if they fail to accept their offer on the BarSAS system before the system closes.

6. Cancellation or deferral of place

- a) An applicant who fails to inform a Provider that they do not wish to take up their place after an offer has been accepted, may result in being liable for fees. Applicants should carefully read the Terms and Conditions of the offer that they have accepted.
- b) Providers may be able to defer a place to the following academic intake with sufficient notice. Providers should be contacted directly if an applicant wishes to defer a place.

7. Enrolment requirements

- a) Applicants are not required to be a member of an Inn of Court upon submission of their application but must be a member upon enrolment on the BPTC.

- b) One of the core requirements of the BPTC is that applicants pass an aptitude test, known as 'BCAT'. It is a multiple choice computer based test which assesses applicant's critical thinking and reasoning. Applicants will not be able to enrol on the BPTC without passing it. For further guidance on the BCAT click on the link below:

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/qualifying-as-a-barrister/bar-professional-training-course/bar-course-aptitude-test/>

In order to take the BCAT test an applicant reference number from the BarSAS system will be needed.

- c) Only those who are fluent in the English Language can take the BPTC. This applies regardless of an applicant's first language and must be demonstrated from the first day of the programme. Fluency can be proved and assessed by means of either of the 2 main language tests, namely IELTS (where a score of 7.5 or above in all parts indicates fluency) or the Pearson language tests (where a score of 73 or above indicates fluency). Please note that these are minimum requirements: some Providers and the Inns of Court may impose higher requirements. If you have any doubt about being able to meet these standards you should undertake one of these tests before enrolling.

BPTC Admissions timetable

[Please note, dates may be subject to change]

| Event | 2016-17 |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| The system opens for applicants (12 noon) | 12 th Dec '16 (Mon) |
| The aptitude test (BCAT) opens | TBC |
| Closing date for first round applications & applications become visible to providers (12 noon) | 11 th Jan '17 (Wed) |
| Offers start to be released from first round applications (12 noon) | 2 nd March '17 (Thur) |
| Acceptance deadline for first round offers (12 noon) | 4 th April '17 (Mon) |
| New clearing round applications and unsuccessful first round applications are released to Providers (12 noon) | 14 th April '17 (Fri) |
| Deadline for joining an Inn of Court | 31 st May '17 |
| Clearing round closes (i.e. no new applicants)(12 noon) | 1 st Sept '17 (Fri) |
| The aptitude test (BCAT) closes (23:00) | TBC |
| System closes (i.e. no more offers/acceptances) (5pm) | TBC |
| Term commences | September (various) |