



Appointment of Audit Committee Chair

Application Pack

July 2026

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The General Council of The Bar

Introduction

The General Council of the Bar represents and, through the independent Bar Standards Board (BSB), regulates, over 18,000 barristers in self-employed and employed practice.

The Bar Council (the representative body) promotes:

- The Bar's high quality specialist advocacy and advisory services
- Fair access to justice for all
- The highest standards of ethics, equality and diversity across the profession, and
- The development of business opportunities for barristers at home and abroad.

Bar Council work includes:

- Communicating regularly with the profession about key matters affecting its interests
- Influencing the development of public policy and legislation affecting the provision of specialist advocacy and advisory services and, more widely, in the profession's and the public interest
- Developing and promoting the work (and the values) of the Bar at home and abroad, to governments, legislatures, the media and other stakeholders, and
- Working to improve entry to the profession (with the aim of ensuring that the Bar is open to all with the requisite ability), to provide rewarding careers and to sustain the long-term future of the Bar.

More information is available on the Bar Council's website:

<https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/>

The Bar Council's [Strategic Plan can be found here.](#)

The Bar Standards Board

The BSB was established in January 2006 as a result of the Bar Council separating its regulatory and representative functions. It is an independent regulatory board responsible for regulating barristers called to the Bar of England and Wales.

The BSB mission is to protect the public by making sure barristers are skilled, act with integrity, and operate fairly and effectively. The responsibilities cover the following key activities:

- setting the standards of education and training to become a barrister;

- setting the standards of continuing professional development to ensure that barristers' skills are maintained throughout their careers;
- setting the standards of conduct for barristers;
- authorising organisations that deliver education and training (referred to as “Authorised Education and Training Organisations”);
- authorising organisations that focus on advocacy, litigation, and specialist legal advice;
- monitoring the service provided by barristers and the organisations we authorise to assure quality; and
- dealing with reports about barristers and organisations we authorise and taking action where appropriate.

More information is available on the BSB’s website:

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/>.

The BSB’s [Strategic Approach and Plan can be found here](#).

Joint Audit Committee

The Joint Audit Committee brings together independent members with representatives from both the Bar Council and the Bar Standards Board, with a critical function to oversee and seek assurances on governance and risk management, internal and external audit and statutory compliance. It must do so whilst operating within a unique organisational framework, respecting the BSB’s regulatory independence in line with the oversight regulator’s [‘Internal Governance Rules’](#).

The following committees also operate in support of Bar Council and BSB around the activities of the Audit Committee.

- **Joint Finance Committee** – responsible to Bar Council for the provision of financial support and advice to its General Management Committee; ensures good financial management and planning activities are undertaken; puts forward proposals for the annual practising certificate fee.
- **General Management Committee (GMC)** - responsible for the management and strategic direction of the representational functions of the Bar Council.
- **Governance, Risk and Audit Committee (GRA) of the Bar Standards Board** - responsible for ensuring the Board's corporate governance standards and internal controls are maintained. The Committee keeps under review and advises the Board on all matters relating to the corporate risk management framework and the BSB's internal audit function. Internal controls and risks related wholly to the BSB’s discharge of its regulatory function are overseen by this Committee and reported to the Board (not also to the joint Audit Committee).

A full list of terms of reference for the above and other committees supporting representational and regulatory functions are included on the websites for [Bar Council](#) and [Bar Standards Board](#).

Vacancy details

The Bar Council and BSB Board wish to appoint an independent lay Chair for the joint **Audit Committee**.

Our Standing Orders outline that the Audit Committee should include “a **Chair who is an independent lay person with relevant audit knowledge and experience** nominated by the Chair of the GCB and the Chair of the BSB acting in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life and taking account of best practice for public appointments, including the Governance Code on Public Appointments.” The postholder will be taking up the role to fill an immediate vacancy.

The terms of reference for the Audit Committee are included in Annex 3.

Applications from individuals with a good knowledge of the governance, risk or audit areas within an organisation, either public or private sector, would be welcomed. We welcome applications from individuals with previous experience chairing committees, and especially those who are interested to work within our unique organisational structure, where the Joint Audit Committee brings together representatives from both representative and regulatory arms of the entity. Experience of complex or highly regulated environments would be beneficial. Applicants should note that lay members cannot be (or have ever been) barristers or solicitors, as defined in paragraph 2(4) of Schedule 1 of the Legal Services Act 2007^[1]. Applicants need not have any legal sector experience.

It is crucial for the integrity of our system of governance that those appointed should be of sufficient standing, integrity and judgement to inspire public confidence in the representative and regulatory arrangements. Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they can commit the time for this role.

Applicants must not be the subject of criminal charges, directors' disqualification orders or be undischarged bankrupts;

All committee members are appointed in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life, a copy of which is at Annex 1.

Time commitment

Committee members are expected to play a full part in the work of the Audit Committee, and to prepare for and attend all its meetings. The type of work carried out by the Audit Committee includes, but is not limited to, overseeing the development of audit processes, reviewing risk mechanisms and areas of risk within the organisation other than those related solely to the BSB's

^[1] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/29/schedule/1>

discharge of its regulatory functions, and keeping under review insurance cover for the organisation.

The Audit Committee usually meets 4 times in the year (on a Thursday evening), in March, July, September and December (though this may change from time to time). Meetings take place in Holborn, London, at the offices of the Bar Council, although remote attendance is an option.

Meetings of the Committee are usually held at 5pm (finishing at 6.30pm).

On occasion, an ad hoc meeting may be called or members may be asked to become involved in a smaller working group of the Committee for which there may be additional meetings.

Terms and conditions

The following is intended as a general guide; specific terms and conditions will accompany letters of appointment.

Appointments will be for a period of up to three years. The three-year term may extraordinarily be renewed once subject to satisfactory performance and agreement of the respective Chairs of the GCB and BSB. Performance review appraisals will be undertaken annually.

The post is remunerated at a flat rate of £330 per meeting, plus 12.07% loading in lieu of holiday pay (£39.83) reviewed periodically, to cover both attendance and preparation time. Travel costs will be reimbursed within the conditions of the Bar Council's travel policy.

For interview attendance by applicants, standard class travel fares or other reasonable travel costs will be reimbursed upon production of receipts.

How to apply

Application Form

To apply please visit the About Us section of our website <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/about/bar-council-governance/vacancies/committee-vacancies.html>

Candidates are required to apply directly as outlined on the Bar Council website only; however candidates with a disability who require adjustments should contact Justina Naik, Governance and Committees Manager (Governance@barcouncil.org.uk) to discuss further. The Bar Council is part of the 'Disability Confident' scheme. Candidates with a disability who meet the essential criteria for this role will be guaranteed an interview under this scheme.

Candidates with queries regarding the position, should contact Richard Cullen, Director of Finance, at rcullen@barcouncil.org.uk, in the first instance to arrange an informal discussion.

Candidates will be asked to provide a covering letter (maximum two pages of A4) outlining how they meet the person specification and eligibility criteria for the role, together with a brief CV (maximum two pages of A4). Applications will be assessed only against the application, and as such, it is important that candidates include all details they consider relevant.

Monitoring form

It is important that the Bar Council and the Bar Standards Board should reflect the diversity of the society that the Bar serves, and applications from all sections of the community are welcomed. To enable us to monitor this properly, you are asked also to complete the monitoring form supplied during the online application process.

Timetable & Interviews

The timetable for the process is as follows:

Closing date for applications: **Friday, 24 July 2026**

Interviews will take place at the Bar Council Offices in Holborn, London, or remotely.

Interviews will be conducted by a selection panel made up of:

- a. The Chair or Vice-Chair of the Bar;
- b. The Chair or Vice-Chair of the BSB; and
- c. An independent lay person.

Annex 1

The Committee on Standards in Public Life has set out 'Seven Principles of Public Life' that it believes should apply to all in the public service. These are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Annex 2

Person specification

Core competencies for the Chair of the joint Audit Committee

All applicants are expected to be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. An interest in and commitment to the integrity of the justice system and diversity and inclusion.
2. Understanding and knowledge of financial, other functional and statutory audit and oversight activities;
3. An appreciation and understanding of the governance role of non-executives (challenge, scrutiny and decision making)
4. Ability to analyse complex evidence and reach rational conclusions, incorporating appropriate advice
5. Sound experience of the not-for-profit and public sector
6. Ability to be objective, independent and impartial
7. A good communicator with strong interpersonal skills
8. Demonstrate sufficient standing, integrity and judgement to inspire public confidence in the representative and regulatory arrangements
9. Experience of leadership and chairing committees, at an executive level
10. A commitment to public interest and the Seven Principles of public life

In addition to the core competencies all members should meet the following relevant criteria:

11. Members should undertake that they are able to do the necessary preparatory work, attend Committee meetings and any necessary induction training and be accessible to provide advice to the Bar Council and the BSB.
12. They must not be the subject of criminal charges, directors' disqualification orders or be undischarged bankrupts.

Annex 3

Excerpt from Standing Orders for Joint Committees of the General Council of the Bar and the Bar Standards Board (dated June 2026)

Audit Committee

1. The terms of reference of the Audit Committee are:

Governance and Risk Management

- a. To advise on the GCB's role as an approved regulator for the purposes of the Legal Services Act 2007 on all corporate governance matters and to review the effectiveness of all internal controls (other than those related solely to the BSB's discharge of its regulatory functions), including financial management arrangements and internal business processes, and in so doing to make appropriate use for this purpose of:
 - i. internal audits;
 - ii. external audits; and
 - iii. reports and assurances from the representative, regulatory and Resources Group functions.
- b. To review the risk management arrangements of the representative, regulatory and Resources Group functions (other than those related solely to the BSB's discharge of its regulatory functions), including processes for assessing, reporting, owning and managing risks to the corporate entity and their reputational and financial implications across all parts of the GCB, and to make recommendations and seek assurances or clarification as may be necessary or desirable in the interests of the GCB as a whole;
- c. To receive risk registers from both the Bar Council and BSB at each meeting and seek assurances that effective control systems are in place and are being adhered to from the Director of Finance, Chief Executive of the GCB and the Director General of the BSB (the BSB should provide a headline overview of the entirety of its corporate risks, but it is accepted that the detail of corporate risks related solely to the discharge of its regulatory functions will be omitted to ensure appropriate regulatory independence);
- d. To receive an assurance opinion from the BSB's Governance, Risk and Audit Committee on the effectiveness of the BSB's risk management processes and internal controls;
- e. To review and make arrangements on whistleblowing processes and the arrangements for investigating fraud, corruption and error;
- f. To keep under review the level and nature of the GCB's insurance cover;

- g. To keep under review the GCB's accounting policies; and
- h. To review the findings of the internal and external auditors, if appropriate, and ensure that issues raised in the management letter are addressed by the appropriate GCB staff, and to ensure that issues raised by the Audit Committee are appropriately responded to;

Internal Audit

- i. To receive assurances from the 'first instance' GCB and BSB panels/committees that the processes in place for internal audit are effective and that any actions raised are addressed;
- j. To review annual internal audit plans from the BSB and to review findings of internal audits relating to GCB shared services or corporate functions (but not those reports of internal audits which are related solely to the discharge of its regulatory functions);

External Audit

- k. To make recommendations to the GCB on the appointment and removal of the external auditors;
- l. To oversee the relationship with the external auditors, including:
 - i. there is a retender for an external audit firm at least every five years;
 - ii. that no audit firm is, normally, appointed as an external auditor for longer than 10 years (any extension will require the approval of the Audit Committee);
 - iii. ensuring that the external auditors are informed of any significant developments or risks which might impact upon the audit process or fee;
 - iv. that the Audit Committee should approve any non-audit services by the external auditor to the GCB.
- m. To monitor and review the external auditor's independence, objectivity and effectiveness;
- n. To review the findings of the external auditor and ensure that appropriate actions are being taken;
- o. To determine and keep under review policy on the engagement of the external auditor to supply non-audit or consultancy services;

- p. To scrutinise the integrity of the GCB's Annual Report and Accounts following detailed review by the Finance Committee and, subject to audit, to recommend them for approval by the GCB; and

Statutory Compliance

- q. To review and make recommendations on the processes in place to ensure that the GCB meets its statutory obligations, including those with regard to employment, data protection and health and safety.