It’s Your Call
A Career at the Bar
If you are the sort of person who...

- Is willing to stand up and argue for an unpopular cause – even one you might not believe in personally
- Believes that everyone – regardless of race, colour, disability, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age or political views – has rights which must be protected
- Believes that no one should be condemned except by due process of law whatever the press might say
- Enjoys working long hours and having a dynamic workload

...then a career as a practising member of the Bar of England and Wales may be for you!

This publication is aimed at anyone interested in becoming a barrister at the Bar of England and Wales, including law and non-law undergraduates and graduates, A level students and mature students. It acts as a companion to the websites of the Bar Council and the four Inns of Court.

Before embarking on a legal career, it is important to have a clear understanding of the stages of training which lead to becoming a barrister and the possible obstacles that you may have to overcome. If you remain convinced that life at the practising Bar is really for you, you will need a great deal of tenacity and commitment in terms of both time and resources. In recent years however, the Bar has made great strides in improving access to the profession for individuals regardless of their social or ethnic background, financial means, age, religion or disability.

For those who succeed, a career at the Bar can be immensely rewarding, not only financially but also in terms of job satisfaction: barristers face a wide variety of challenges and no two days in practice will be the same. This booklet should give you a better idea of whether you have what it takes to become a barrister, and will outline the stages of training that barristers must complete as well as the available sources of help and advice.

A career as a barrister can be very satisfying but you should be aware before you start that it is a very competitive market as the figures below showing the number of students undertaking the Bar Vocational Course (BVC) now renamed the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) demonstrate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year Starting</th>
<th>BPTC (BVC) Students</th>
<th>First Six Pupillages 1 Oct-30 Sept</th>
<th>Second Six Pupillages 1 Oct-30 Sept</th>
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<td>2005/6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007/8</td>
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(*148 on 30 September 2002)
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What you need to know before you start

- The legal profession is split into two major branches: barristers and solicitors, so the first thing you need to do is decide which most suits your skills and interests. Although some people argue that the distinction between these two professions is becoming more blurred, there are still real differences.

Barristers are specialist advisers and advocates and, providing they fulfil the relevant training criteria, they can appear in all courts including the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.

The majority of barristers work as self-employed practitioners, undertaking work that has been referred to them by a solicitor. The Public Access Rules came into force in July 2004 and members of the public are now able, in many circumstances, to instruct a barrister directly.

In order to undertake Public Access work, a barrister needs to complete an additional short training course. There is also Licensed Access which is a licensing system enabling organisations or individuals with suitable expertise to instruct barristers directly within their areas of expertise.

About 3,000 barristers are employed in organisations i.e. employed practice, working in a range of places including the Government Legal Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, industry, commerce and the Armed Forces. The type of work they do depends on the employer, but will require the same ability to offer specialised legal advice and advocacy as outlined above. More information about barristers in employment can be found later in this booklet.

Seeking information

There are a variety of careers fairs you can attend and organisations you can contact to find out more about life at the Bar. We suggest the following:

- Your university careers service – the Bar has strong links with the university careers advisors’ group (AGCAS) and frequently updates all careers services with the latest information

- University law careers fairs – even if your university does not hold a law careers fair it is likely a university near you will do so

- National Pupillage Fair (see www.targetjobs.co.uk for more information)

- Bar Council and the Inns of Court websites – see page 24 for further details

- Chambers’ and legal employers’ websites

- See also websites from the other branches of the legal profession to find out whether they might be more suited to your career interests: www.lawsociety.org.uk – Law Society, www.sra.org.uk – Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), www.ilex.org.uk – Institute of Legal Executives

- Legal Hub provides you with a range of legal information and resources: www.legalhub.co.uk
Institutions of the Bar

• The Bar Council, the Bar Standards Board and the Inns of Court are the governing institutions of the Bar

• The Inns of Court provide education and training in a collegiate atmosphere as well as scholarships and other support

• Chambers provide the setting from which most independent self-employed barristers practise

• Circuits assist in the training functions and provide locally-based support for practising barristers

• Specialist Bar Associations provide training and other support for barristers practising in specialist areas of the law

The Bar Council and the Bar Standards Board

As the governing body for the Bar, the Bar Council has both representational and regulatory responsibilities. The Council’s representative work covers many areas including negotiation of fees for the publicly funded Bar, the administration of justice and maintaining relations with Government, the European Union, legal professions in other countries and other professional organisations with common interests. Its regulatory obligations are discharged by its regulatory arm – the Bar Standards Board – which has responsibility for providing a framework for formulating appropriate rules of conduct and practice and ensuring compliance with those rules.

Chambers

Self-employed barristers usually group together to form a set of chambers, in which members will share office accommodation and overheads. Every set of chambers has an experienced barrister or barristers at its head, a number of members of varying seniority and usually one or more clerks who are responsible for much of the administrative work relating to their practices. Permanent members of a set of chambers are known as tenants and temporary or probationary members who have completed pupillage are often referred to as squatters.

The Inns of Court

You must join one of the four Inns – Lincoln’s Inn, Inner Temple, Middle Temple or Gray’s Inn (all based in London) – before you commence the vocational stage of training. These provide educational and collegiate activities, library facilities, support for barristers and student members, advocacy training and other continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities. The Inns provide the mechanism by which people become barristers, known as “Call to the Bar” or “Call”. They also provide a great deal of valuable financial assistance for the various stages of becoming a barrister. For further details of the role of the Inns and their scholarships and awards, please visit the Inns’ websites and see pages 7 and 24 of this brochure.
Circuit and SBA websites

Circuits

For the purposes of administration and organisation of the court system, England and Wales is divided into six circuits: South Eastern, Midland, Northern, North Eastern, Western and Wales and Chester. Barristers in chambers on each of these circuits come together to form the Circuit, headed by a senior barrister as their Circuit Leader. Circuits undertake similar functions as the Inns in respect of pupillage and training and hold frequent social events.

The Circuits’ websites are as follows:

South Eastern
www.southeastcircuit.org.uk

Northern
www.northerncircuit.org.uk

Midland
www.midlandcircuit.co.uk

North Eastern
www.northeasterncircuit.co.uk

Wales & Chester
www.walesandchestercircuit.org.uk

Western
www.westerncircuit.org.uk

SBAs are associations dedicated to the interests of particular groups of barristers. SBAs can promote their members’ interests, for example responding to proposals for regulatory and legislative changes. See pages 30-35 for profiles of barristers who practise in some of these areas.

Specialist Bar Associations (SBAs)

Administrative Law Bar Association
www.adminlaw.org.uk

Bar Association for Commerce Finance and Industry
www.bacfi.org

Bar Association for Local Government and the Public Service
www.balgps.org.uk

Bar European Group
www.bareuropeangroup.org.uk

Chancery Bar Association
www.chba.org.uk

Commercial Bar Association
www.combar.com

Criminal Bar Association
www.criminalbar.com

Employment Law Bar Association
www.elba.org.uk

Family Law Bar Association
www.flba.co.uk

FDA
www.fda.org.uk

Intellectual Property Bar Association
www.ipba.co.uk

London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association
www.lclcb.org.uk

Midland Chancery and Commercial Bar Association
Tel: 0121 246 7000 (no website)

Northern Chancery Bar Association
www.nchba.co.uk

Northern Circuit Commercial Bar Association (NCCBA)
www.nccba.org.uk

Parliamentary Bar Mess
Tel: 020 7353 8415 (no website)

Personal Injuries Bar Association
www.piiba.org.uk

Planning and Environmental Bar Association
www.peba.info

Professional Negligence Bar Association
www.pnba.co.uk

Property Bar Association
www.propertybar.org.uk

Public Access Bar Association (PABA)
www.paba.org.uk

Revenue Bar Association
www.revenue-bar.org

Technology and Construction Bar Association
www.tecb.org

Western Chancery and Commercial Bar Association
Tel: 0117 921 3456 (no website)
Making the decision and giving the commitment

• Barristers need to have commitment in addition to certain skills

• Before going to university consider whether you are willing to make the required commitment and whether you have the right skills

Becoming a practising barrister is by no means an easy option. It requires a great deal of commitment – including financial commitment – as well as a wide range of abilities. Hard work, long hours and time pressures may sometimes require you to make considerable sacrifices in your social and family life. You may not be successful in obtaining pupillage so you need to take this into account before making a commitment. See also page 28 of this brochure for the advice now being given to all those interested in becoming a barrister.

If, after careful thought, you decide to become a barrister, you will find that there are real opportunities for a satisfying and rewarding career for people with the right combination of skills and qualities, regardless of their educational, social or ethnic background.

The skills and qualities that make a good barrister

Increasingly, recruiters are looking for graduates who possess specific skills to equip them for the changing world of work. The ability to adapt and manage change is an essential requirement. The situation is no different for would-be barristers. Students must be able to demonstrate certain discernible skills both to qualify as a barrister and to succeed in the competitive professional and business world. These skills include:

• Academic ability
• Outstanding written and oral communication skills
• An ability to absorb and analyse complex material often very quickly
• Numeracy skills
• Interpersonal skills
• Good judgment
• IT skills
• Professional responsibility
• A commitment to continuing professional development
• An ability to work with others
• Total integrity
Before university

Prior to university, it is important that you are aware of the importance in choosing A level (or equivalent) subjects carefully and work hard to achieve the best grades possible. These choices and your ability in those courses could affect your chances of receiving a university offer, particularly at the most selective universities, but also your professional progression in a range of careers later in life.

The Bar is a competitive profession and you will have to demonstrate that you have excelled academically in your school and at university. Chambers and the Employed Bar are likely to look back to your school grades to assess your application compared to the many other outstanding applicants. Aspiring barristers should focus on getting the best grades in challenging subjects that are of interest to them. It is also important to consider the subjects that will provide you with the best foundation to succeed in your university degree and subsequent career training.

Being a barrister requires high levels of in-depth analysis, which is often best learned from taking more traditional A level subjects. Just as with selective university admission, the combination of A levels is an important aspect of your application. In order not to disadvantage yourself by taking certain subjects that could be considered less effective preparation for the profession, consider those courses that are both of interest to you and that will challenge you academically. Subjects that are not considered ‘core’ A levels for competitive university admission will often be considered likewise by some Chambers. While many school pupils take A level Law because they believe it will add to their law application, this subject does not necessarily add to an application if you do not have the basics in other areas, such as English, which are needed to excel in law.

In addition, certain areas of law will require you to have an understanding of specific subject matter. If you are interested in medical law, for example, it might be worthwhile to consider taking an A level in Biology or another physical science, while a degree course in combined language and law, may often require an A level in that specific language for entry.

Increasing competition has meant that the majority of pupillage positions are offered to those with at least an upper second class honours degree and high A level grades. Chambers may consider exceptional candidates outside this range but you should remember that you will be competing with those of high academic merit.

Demonstrating a passion for the legal profession through extra-curricular activities is important, particularly if you wish to show that you have a talent that is not demonstrated in your grades. In school, you should consider voluntary activities that demonstrate your passion in law and advocacy. Chambers want to see that you are well-rounded and can apply your learning to practical situations. You might like to think about starting up a debating or mock trial team at your school and competing in regional or national events. You could also get involved with activities that will build on your presentation and speaking skills, such as drama or public speaking. This will help you to make sure that a career as a barrister is right for you.

Your hard work in challenging A level subjects and extra-curricular activities will help you to showcase your skills and demonstrate your determination to succeed in a career at the Bar.
The academic stage of training

- The LLB, also called a Qualifying Law Degree
- The law conversion course, known as the CPE or GDL

You have a choice of two options to complete the first stage of your training. The first is to obtain a law degree. The second is to obtain a degree in another subject and then take a one-year conversion course, usually known as the Common Professional Examination (CPE) or Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL). Whichever path you choose, you will need to obtain at least a lower second class honours degree, but to stand a realistic chance in the competitive market for pupillage and tenancy you should aim for an upper second class honours degree or higher or a postgraduate qualification.

If your law degree does not cover the core legal subjects (e.g., if you choose other options or study law with another subject) you will have to complete the relevant parts of a conversion course before passing on to the next stage of training. If you are following a modular degree programme, you should consult your tutor to ensure that the pathway you follow will meet the Bar’s requirements. For further information on the academic stage of training, please see www.barstandardsboard.org.uk.

The role of the Inns of Court

One of the unique features of the Bar is the renowned and historic Inns of Court. In order to begin the vocational training stage to become a barrister, you must join one of the four Inns by the end of May in the year you intend to begin the BPTC. These 'honourable societies' are: Lincoln’s Inn, Inner Temple, Middle Temple and Gray’s Inn, all of which are located in London’s legal precinct along with many sets of Chambers, where self-employed barristers work, and a number of Courts including the Royal Courts of Justice.

The four Inns of Court have long and distinct histories, coming into being around the middle of the 14th Century. Owing to the high level of proficiency needed to practise law, the Inns were separately formed as institutions with sole responsibility for legal education and, therefore, as gatekeepers to the profession. While the Inns no longer provide all the education and training necessary to become a barrister, much of which has been devolved to universities, they continue to play an essential part in the vocational training of student barristers and the continuing professional development of practising barristers throughout their careers.

The Inns of Court continue to hold the exclusive right of admission to the Bar, most recently enshrined in the Legal Services Act 2007. This process, known as “Call to the Bar” or “Call”, occurs after you have successfully completed the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and have undertaken a number of professional exercises in the form of twelve Qualifying Sessions organised by your Inn. Qualifying Sessions consist of collegiate and educational activities, designed to complement your training on the BPTC, in the form of lectures, advocacy training, moots, debates and social events that allow you to meet with barristers and judges. However, Call to the Bar does not entitle you to practise as a barrister until you have undertaken pupillage – a form of apprenticeship – and obtained a practising certificate.

Each Inn’s membership comprises students, barristers, judges and Masters of the Bench or ‘Benchers’. Masters of the Bench form the governing body of the Inn and new Benchers are chosen from existing members. The senior Benchers of the Inn is the Treasurer, a position held for a year. The Under or Sub-Treasurer is the Chief Executive of the Inn.

The Inns, between them, offer approximately £4 million each year in scholarships and awards to students studying for the Bar. Awards are available for the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) year as well as the BPTC year. Application details are on the Inns’ websites – see page 24. You should note that you are only able to apply to one Inn for a scholarship.

All the Inns provide a similar range of services including educational and collegiate activities, library facilities, support for barristers and student members, advocacy training and other continuing professional development opportunities. Your choice of Inn may be guided by atmosphere, character or history, size of the Inn, scholarships on offer, range of student societies and opportunities for advocacy training.

For further details of the scholarships and awards available and the services provided, please browse the Inns’ websites and printed material, and contact the Inns’ staff who will be more than happy to offer you advice and arrange a tour. The one-off admission fee to join an Inn ranges from £85 to £100.
Mini-pupillage and work experience

• Finding mini-pupillages

• Participation in relevant activities

Mini-pupillage

Before committing yourself to a career at the practising Bar, it is wise to get an insight into what a barrister actually does. The best way to do this is by undertaking work experience in the form of a “mini-pupillage”. These usually last a week in which you might be reading papers, discussing cases, shadowing a barrister and attending court. As well as helping you decide whether life as a barrister would really suit you, mini-pupillages will also expose you to legal areas in which you might like to specialise.

Some chambers require applicants to undertake a mini-pupillage at their chambers if they wish to be considered for full pupillage there at a later date. Others may include assessment within the mini-pupillage as part of their selection criteria; this assessment may require written work to be completed. After undertaking a mini-pupillage you should be able to demonstrate what you have learnt in terms of skills, experience and career direction, and be able to use this to your advantage within application forms and in interviews.

Visit the pupillage website (www.pupillageportal.com) to find out which organisations offer mini-pupillages or refer to the paper version, i.e. the Pupillages Handbook. You will need to write to chambers directly to arrange mini-pupillages. As places are limited, you should enquire well in advance. Note that some chambers select mini-pupils whilst others operate a first come first served system.

Bar Mock Trial Competition

This competition helps young people gain an understanding of criminal law, the criminal justice system and how courts work through taking part in a mock trial. Teams of up to 15 school students (16 in Scotland), aged between 15 and 18, prepare the prosecution and defence of two specially written criminal cases and take on the roles of lawyers, witnesses, court staff and jurors. The competition is open to all state secondary schools and Further Education Colleges in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and is organised by the Citizenship Foundation. More information is available on the Citizenship Foundation’s website – www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk

Social Mobility Foundation – Bar Placement Scheme

In 2007 the Bar Council, in conjunction with the Social Mobility Foundation, introduced a chambers placement scheme to give talented students in Year 12 from low income backgrounds a flavour of life at the Bar. The scheme runs each summer. Students are selected by the Social Mobility Foundation. More information can be found on the Social Mobility Foundation’s website: www.socialmobility.org.uk

Other work experience

Mini-pupillages are important, but other types of work experience can be equally valuable. Working in a solicitors’ firm or law centre will allow you to show in pupillage applications and interviews your reasons for wishing to become a barrister, and will also give you a wider view of the legal profession as a whole. Non-legal work experience, even if only part time or holiday work, should also be mentioned in application forms if you can demonstrate what practical and personal skills you have gained.

If you are considering a career change, and have full time work experience in another sector, you should be able to demonstrate how the skills and experience from the previous career would be of benefit to you at the Bar. Transferable skills, whether organisational experience or self-employment, might include public speaking or case management, for example.

During your studies

Gain as much relevant experience and knowledge as you can both at university and on the BPTC by participating in debating, mooting, speaking competitions, the Inns’ advocacy weekends, and any mock trials available, as well as reading the legal pages of the newspapers regularly. In addition, try to work for a Citizens Advice Bureau or the Free Representation Unit and attend court regularly. All of these activities, while developing your understanding of the work of the Bar, may also assist you in your search for pupillage. Make sure you learn as much as you can from each experience and be prepared to explain what you have learnt when completing application forms and attending interviews.
Profile of Alexandra McHenry

Mini-Pupil

I wanted to be a barrister from a young age, but of course perceptions are different when you're younger. I did my first mini-pupillage in the third year of my degree, at a family set, and it changed my preconceptions, but confirmed that I wanted to become a barrister. I was reading politics for my first degree, so then I was sure that I wanted to do the conversion course and go down the barrister route.

Mini-pupillages are very important if you are considering a career at the Bar. They give you a feel for what the job is and what kind of work is involved in being a barrister, as well as what the different areas of practice involve. As you need to decide which area you wish to practise in before applying for pupillage you should try to do a range of minis in a variety of sets. I thought that I wanted to practise in crime, but a couple of minis in criminal sets, interesting as they were, made me realise it was not for me.

You don’t need to know someone in chambers in order to get a mini there. If you look at a chambers’ website, they will tell you how to apply. Generally you send in your CV with a covering letter, but some chambers have an application form with specific questions. Some even have a lottery type system so everyone who applies has an equal chance!

Minis vary and some are more structured and run for a week whereas others are just a couple of days long. Also, some are assessed and are part of the recruitment process for pupillage. I have been on mini-pupilages where I have shadowed just one barrister for a couple of days, and others where I have followed whichever barrister has something interesting on. You cannot predict what cases a chambers will have on when you are there.

Some chambers have a group of mini-pupils – usually around five or so – all at the same time. You will usually all tackle a legal problem together, which sounds daunting but it really is not! Unless the mini is assessed then it doesn’t matter how well you do, it’s just an educational exercise. You should always take notes on the legal problem and keep them safe, because that will give you something to talk about if you are ever selected for a pupillage interview at that set.

How many minis should you do? I was once told at least three, but no more than ten, which sounds sensible. Of course there is no rule, but it is clear that minis are an essential part of the path to becoming a barrister. They show that you are keen when you are applying for pupillage and they give you a valuable insight to your chosen career. Most importantly, they allow you to spend time with barristers and give you a chance to ask questions, which you cannot do on a visit to court in the public gallery.
After completing your law degree or conversion course, all intending barristers, whether self-employed or employed, from home or overseas, must take a one year full-time, or two years part-time, Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC)

The course is available at carefully selected institutions throughout the country which are listed below:

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<tr>
<th>Course provider</th>
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<tr>
<td>BPP Law School, Leeds*</td>
<td>0113 386 8250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP Law School, London*</td>
<td>020 7430 2304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP Law School, London*</td>
<td>020 7404 5787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bpp.com">www.bpp.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff Law School</td>
<td>029 2087 4964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cf.ac.uk/claws/cpls">www.cf.ac.uk/claws/cpls</a></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Law School, London*</td>
<td>020 7404 5787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.city.ac.uk/law/vocational/bvc">www.city.ac.uk/law/vocational/bvc</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Law, Birmingham</td>
<td>0800 015 9519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Law, London*</td>
<td>0800 28 99 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.college-of-law.co.uk">www.college-of-law.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaplan Law School, London</td>
<td>020 7367 6400</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.kaplanlawschool.org.uk">www.kaplanlawschool.org.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Metropolitan University*</td>
<td>0161 247 3053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.law.mmu.ac.uk/postgrad/BPTC">www.law.mmu.ac.uk/postgrad/BPTC</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nottingham Law School</td>
<td>0115 848 2888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.nls.ntu.ac.uk">www.nls.ntu.ac.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Northumbria, Newcastle*</td>
<td>0191 227 3939</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://law.unn.ac.uk">http://law.unn.ac.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the West of England, Bristol*</td>
<td>0117 965 6261 x 3769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.uwe.ac.uk/law/bilp">www.uwe.ac.uk/law/bilp</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* course also offered on a part-time basis over two years</td>
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Course fees vary between each institution and the fees for UK home students 2009/2010 are listed below:

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<th>Provider</th>
<th>Full Time</th>
<th>Part Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BPP Law School, Leeds</td>
<td>£12,295</td>
<td>£11,845</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPP Law School, London</td>
<td>£15,045</td>
<td>£13,845</td>
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<td>Cardiff Law School</td>
<td>£10,100</td>
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<td>City Law School, London</td>
<td>£14,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Law, Birmingham</td>
<td>£10,900</td>
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<td>TBC</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Nottingham Law School</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Northumbria, Newcastle</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the West of England, Bristol</td>
<td>£11,250</td>
<td>£11,020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note that the figures above are for home students only, fees for overseas students can be obtained from the individual providers.

Some financial assistance is available, for example, the Inns of Court provide approximately £4 million each year in scholarships. For details of loans for the BPTC on preferential terms and scholarships, please see the websites of the Bar Council and the Inns of Court.

See www.barstandardsboard.org.uk for further details about the BPTC. For details of individual courses and a prospectus, contact the relevant institution. Applications for the BPTC are made through an online application form system, BPTC Online. See www.barprofessionaltraining.org.uk for further details of how and when to apply.

Details of BPTC pass numbers and failed/referred figures for 2007/2008 can be found at Appendix 1 of this document which is at page 25.
Profile of Emma Whysall

BVC (BPTC) Student

At first glance I don’t fit the common stereotype of what a Bar student should be. I’m not Oxbridge, I don’t have a first and I didn’t even study law at University.

Yet, at no point since I decided to become a barrister has anyone ever told me that I should not try. It is easy, when you sit down and look at the Bar as an option, to be scared by the statistics for pupillage and tenancy, by the rumours that the independent Bar will vanish, and — most daunting — the cost of getting there.

I made the decision to become a barrister while finishing a Masters degree in History. Now, three years later, I do not for a minute regret making that choice. Yes, it has been hard. The first step was the GDL — which essentially distils what law students learn over two years into eight months of intense study. It is not an easy course: lectures and small group sessions cover the basic seven core areas of law: Contract, Criminal, EC, Equity, Land, Public and Tort. These eight months conclude with seven three-hour examinations over some ten days. Challenging, but surmountable: hundreds of us do it every year. Choosing the non-law route at university, and then converting, does not put you at a disadvantage when you start the BVC (now BPTC). If you look at chambers’ websites you will see that many barristers have done it before you.

Second is the BVC – a one-year course to teach the skills to be a barrister, as well as the basics in litigation. I found it practical and completely different to any previous course I had studied. The best thing about the course is, every day, you are practising the skills for the career you want — so advocacy, advocacy and more advocacy — in every way imaginable.

More important than what you do in classes and at university is the rest of your CV. Everyone applying for pupillage has similar academic achievements, so you have to find ways to make your CV stand out from the rest. At university I was involved in committees and ran social events. Whilst doing the GDL and BVC I have mooted and debated and I have put all the skills I have learnt into practice doing pro-bono work. I have done numerous mini-pupillages and involved myself at my Inn, putting me in contact with practising barristers, asking questions and making sure I stay informed about what is going on. As a student you have free time — so use it!

My biggest challenge to becoming a barrister was the cost. I was lucky enough to get a scholarship from my Inn: which helped with my fees. The combined cost of the fees for the GDL and BVC was nearly £20,000, so I still had to find a way to make ends meet. I found myself working part-time during both courses, while studying full time and doing a list of extra curricular activities. It is possible and you might as well get used to being busy now: it will only get worse if and when you get pupillage. All these commitments have not stopped me from enjoying the last two years and making some great friends.

Do not be put off by the horror stories. If becoming a barrister is what you really want to do, you’ll find a way. What am I up to now? Pupillage interviews! Good luck!
Getting the training and experience: pupillage

• Training and experience

After successful completion of the BPTC you may commence pupillage although you may apply for it before starting the course. Pupillage is a one-year period of in-service training, split between the first “non-practising six”, when you shadow an experienced barrister, and the second “practising six”, when you are entitled to supply legal services and exercise rights of audience under supervision (although in some specialist chambers, particularly commercial or chancery sets you will be unlikely to do any of your own work during this time). Pupillage can be undertaken in chambers or in another organisation approved by the Bar Standards Board. Various forms of external training, such as working for a solicitors’ firm, marshalling (i.e. shadowing) a judge or working with an EU lawyer, can also count towards your pupillage requirements. However, competition is intense as there are many more applicants than available pupillages.

Statistics showing the numbers of students from each BPTC provider that received pupillage in 2007 and 2008 can be found at Appendix 2 of this document.

Training and experience

All pupils are supervised by one or more pupil supervisors – experienced barristers responsible for organising training, supervising progress, allocating work and assessing performance. Through pupillage, chambers and organisations decide whether to offer pupils a permanent place in the set or organisation at the end of their training.

Pupillage is hard work. The first six generally consists of observing and assisting your pupil supervisor and other barristers from the chambers or organisation. You will be expected to undertake legal research, draft opinions, read your pupil supervisor’s paperwork and observe him or her in conferences and in court.

Provided you have satisfactorily completed the first six, with your pupil supervisor’s permission you will be able to practise as a barrister and even appear in court as an advocate in the second six. The transition to the second six is therefore significant and can be daunting. This is where you start to build your own reputation. Depending on the area of practice you may have cases of your own, clients of your own and court appearances of your own where cases will be won or lost.

• Money matters

In addition, the Bar Standards Board requires all pupils to satisfactorily complete an assessed advocacy training course and to attend a practice management course, both organised by the Inns or Circuits. The advocacy training course is taught by senior barristers and judges who are also accredited advocacy trainers. The Practice Management Course offers practical help with managing a practice, including advice on financial issues. Barristers must also undertake a forensic accountancy course either during pupillage or during the first three years in practice.

Money matters

All pupillages must now be funded to a minimum level by pupillage providers. The first six months must be funded by an award of £5,000. In the second six months the pupillage provider can either pay at least £5,000 or guarantee receipts of at least £5,000. The money must be paid to the pupils in monthly instalments (i.e. a minimum of £833.33 per month). In some chambers awards are significantly higher than the minimum. Please see the Pupillage Handbook for details of awards offered by Chambers.

It is possible to obtain pupillage prior to commencing the BPTC. In these circumstances some pupillage providers offer financial assistance to their future pupils.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Once pupillage has been completed and you are in practice, your learning and development do not stop. All barristers must keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date throughout their careers, through CPD. Barristers in their first three years of practice must undertake 45 hours of CPD, including at least nine hours of advocacy training and three hours of ethics training provided by the Inns and Circuits. Thereafter all practitioners have been subject to CPD requirements and are required to undertake an annual minimum of 12 hours of CPD.
Applying for pupillage

• All pupillage advertisements can be found at the pupillages website: www.pupillageportal.com

• Pupillages are either Pupillage Portal or non-Pupillage Portal

All pupillage vacancies are advertised on the pupillage website at www.pupillageportal.com. On this website you will find “Pupillage Portal” pupillages and “non-Pupillage Portal” pupillages. “Pupillage Portal” is an online pupillage recruitment system designed to make the process of applying for pupillage much easier. Applicants complete one application form and can submit it to up to 12 participating Pupillage Portal chambers per recruitment season. All applications must be submitted by a certain date and all offers are communicated through the online system at set dates. Around two thirds of pupillage providers recruit through Pupillage Portal, the rest use their own procedures, usually their own application form. The Pupillages Handbook acts as a companion to the pupillage website, allowing you to browse the pupillage vacancies offline. However, as pupillage details are subject to change throughout the year the most up-to-date information will be found online. It is worth checking the Newsflash page of the Pupillage Portal website regularly, as this section lists late vacancies, changes to pupillages and other important news for applicants.

Whether Pupillage Portal or non-Pupillage Portal, all pupillage providers are asked to abide by a common recruitment timetable which is generally as follows:

• No offers can be made from 1 May to 31 July
• No offers can be made before 31 July in the applicant’s penultimate undergraduate year

Before applying find out as much as you can about your preferred chambers: the work they undertake, their pupillage selection procedures, the training offered and their recruitment procedures and policies. This information is given on the pupillage website, in the Pupillages Handbook, in the online Bar Directory and in chambers’ own websites and brochures. The National Pupillage Fair will also help you find out more about different sets of chambers and meet some of the people you might be working with. For dates, venues and to reserve your place at the next fair, go to: www.targetpupillagefair.co.uk or call 01491 826262. Note that it usually takes place in March each year at one of the Inns of Court.

There are approximately 500 vacancies for pupillage each year and competition for places is intense. Many students with excellent degrees and BPTC results are unsuccessful in obtaining pupillage at their first attempt. You should be prepared for the possibility that you may need to re-apply for pupillage. Consider how you can use your time, should this happen, to improve your CV and interview technique.

External training opportunities

As well as spending time in chambers or a pupillage training organisation, all or part of the practising six months may be satisfied by various forms of external training, or a combination of them, provided Bar Standards Board approval is obtained beforehand. These include:

• Six months with a qualified solicitor or qualified lawyer employed or in private practice in an EU member state
• Six months undertaking a “stage” of five months duration or more in the legal department of the European Commission in Brussels, Luxembourg or London
• Up to six weeks as a marshal with a judge of the High Court or with a Circuit Judge
• Four weeks with a solicitor or other professional whose work is relevant to that of your pupillage supervisor
• Four weeks with an organisation which supplies legal services to the public free of charge or for a nominal fee, such as a law centre, pro bono clinic or Free Representation Unit
Profile of Nathan Rasiah

Pupil

“What fine places of slow torture they are! ... The waiting – the hope – the disappointment – the fear – the misery – the poverty ...”

Happily, things have changed since the days of the poor pupil in Dickens’ The Pickwick Papers. Nowadays, all pupillages are funded and many Chambers provide excellent training and support.

I spent the first six months of pupillage with my pupil supervisors who appeared in serious Crown Court trials involving offences such as rape, armed robbery, murder and serious fraud. It was a chance to learn the ropes from experienced practitioners by observing and assisting them, and discussing their cases.

After six months, I began practising alone, mainly defending in the Magistrates’ courts. The first few weeks of second six, ‘on your feet’, is an exciting time. Most pupils in criminal sets are in court regularly. Sometimes the papers arrive in chambers late in the afternoon in which case the evening is spent preparing. On other days, you may be called out to represent someone for a first appearance – usually someone arrested and charged the previous night. Once at court you have to get hold of additional information from the Prosecution, read it, meet the client in the cells, advise them and take instructions, and represent them at court.

Pupillage in a civil or commercial set generally involves a lot more assessed written work and less time in court. But wherever you go, it’s hard work. Tenancies are limited, so it is competitive. There is usually a sense of camaraderie among pupils; collegiate support is an important feature of life at the Bar, and I’ve always found people to turn to for help.

Financial rewards vary. Criminal law is not particularly lucrative at the junior end. If predictability and financial security are important to you, the criminal Bar is probably not for you. That said, for my part, it has been a singular privilege to advise and represent individuals when their liberty is at stake. In a recent speech celebrating Liberty’s 75th anniversary, Lord Bingham observed:

“Human rights […] are protected for the benefit above all of society’s outcasts, those who need legal protection because they have no other voice – the prisoners, the mentally ill, the gypsies, the homosexuals, the immigrants, the asylum-seekers, those who are at any time the subject of public obloquy.”

If that’s something that strikes a chord with you, then a career as an independent advocate may be something to pursue.

It is important to get to know the profession before applying. Sets invest a lot in pupils and they want people committed to the Bar. Mini-pupillages and work experience are vital, but there are many things that you can do on your own initiative – browse the law reports and journals, visit courts, attend lectures and seminars. Be alive to opportunities. In my second year of university, I took a snap decision to spend an Erasmus year studying in the Netherlands. During the year, I entered an international law mooting competition and ended up spending six months working on the Milosevic trial at the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia – something which has lead to a long-standing interest in international criminal law.

It’s a long slog, and you should be prepared for setbacks along the way, however, the single most important determinant of your future is not how often things go your way, but how you react when they don’t.
Starting tenancy

• Life as a junior tenant

Although pupillage is the principal means by which chambers select junior tenants, even a glowingly successful pupillage is no guarantee of a tenancy. If you are really determined to make it as a barrister in self-employed practice you may have to consider a third six or “squatting” i.e. staying in chambers on a temporary basis, until you can find a tenancy.

Life as a junior tenant

It is hard to generalise about life as a junior tenant, as your experience will depend on your area of practice and your chambers. Sometimes junior tenants are “led” by their seniors (i.e. they assist them in large, important cases) but generally they are responsible for their own cases and clients. Barristers specialising in criminal and family law are likely to spend a great deal of time in court, whereas civil practitioners will probably attend court less often, especially as civil procedures encourage the use of alternative methods of dispute resolution. Civil practice is extremely diverse, ranging from personal injury and employment law to insolvency, taxation and trusts. Appearing before tribunals (e.g. employment, immigration) is an important aspect of many young barristers’ work.

Because junior tenants are self-employed, the flow of work can be sporadic and the hours of work irregular. You may be given very little notice of court appearances. Briefs can arrive by fax in the evening for a case to be heard a hundred miles away the next morning. However, what you lose in terms of social life will be compensated for by the increased volume of work that you will receive. Unfortunately, you may still have to wait a while to be paid thereby further increasing the size of your overdraft.

Despite all this, most young barristers would agree that their career was worth any hardship entailed. Other professionals will make similar sacrifices in their social lives without the benefits of flexibility that self-employment brings.

London and beyond?

Over one-third of practising barristers are based outside London, although some work in annexes of large London chambers. When undertaking mini-pupillages, try to do some both in and out of London so you can see the differences for yourself. Take into account factors such as the higher cost of living in London. You will probably have to travel far and wide at the beginning of your career, wherever you settle down to live and work. Pupils on circuit will attend advocacy training courses organised by their circuit association. The circuits are also the focus for continuing professional development, social events and sporting occasions as well as more legal matters.

• Practising in London or on Circuit

The figures below show you the number of barristers who obtained tenancy between:

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<th>Period</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1 October 2008 &amp; 12 December 2008</td>
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The figures below show you the total number of barristers who started employed practice between:

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<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 October 2008 &amp; 12 December 2008</td>
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</table>
Profile of Fayyaz Afzal OBE

Junior Barrister

Working as a barrister is a way of life rather than an occupation which either consumes or impacts on every aspect of your free time. It is never boring.

I am blind and hoped to become a barrister from a young age having been inspired by programmes on television and motivated by the prospect of assisting others whilst being part of a prestigious profession. I am from Rochdale, married at the age of 17 and became a father during the first year of university. It was therefore necessary to adjust to married life, fatherhood and being an undergraduate at virtually the same time.

I graduated from Staffordshire University and decided to become a barrister. This decision was viewed with scepticism as people found it difficult to understand that a sight impaired individual could successfully practise at the Bar bearing in mind the very few blind barristers at the time (approximately six today). However these views were rarely aired or communicated and I was simply left to get on with it.

The Bar Vocational Course (now BPTC) was the most challenging aspect of the training as there was no financial support to employ a guide/reader so I relied on ad hoc help from friends and family. Despite this, I passed the course and was Called in 1999 and won the BBC Asia Award in the Young Achievers category.

I undertook a mixed common law pupillage at New Walk Chambers in Leicester, which provided an excellent grounding and a good base for my current practice in Regulatory Crime, Family and some general civil work. I have been practising for 10 years now and am in court daily dealing with cases of increasing complexity. I thoroughly enjoy the cut and thrust of being in Court and the variety of work.

Developing a practice is not an easy task and requires investment in terms of time and energy but it also presents an opportunity to demonstrate the capacity to undertake work professionally and to secure repeat instructions. The realisation that I am blind often elicits comments of amazement, admiration and respect from clients, colleagues and judges.

I have been fortunate in many ways and have benefited from various opportunities such as speaking at the World Bar Conference, serving on the Advocacy Training Council as well as various other professional committees and being named as the Community Lawyer of the Year and receiving the OBE.

I have found it very helpful to have a Mentor at the Bar to guide me and I think those new to the Bar would also benefit so I act as a Mentor/Sponsor for LLB/Bar Students. The guidance of someone who has already overcome the challenges that an individual can face is of huge benefit.

Life at the Bar is unique and I cannot think of a more exciting and rewarding career.
One of the fastest growing areas of opportunities for barristers is as employees within Government, public service, the Armed Forces, in commerce and industry, the financial services sector and law firms. Barristers act as advisers, advocates, managers, regulators, investigators and prosecutors.

Many of these career opportunities were not traditionally open to barristers but with an increasing value placed upon the skills of barristers, particularly by Government and Financial Services institutions, the number of barristers in employment has grown steadily in recent times. Barristers are valued by their employers for their independence, their analysis, their specialist and forensic skills, their integrity and their abilities as persuasive advocates.

The Government, including the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Government Legal Service (GLS), is the largest employer of barristers followed by banks, companies and law firms. In total, just over 3,000 barristers are in employed practice and comprise one-fifth of the practising Bar in England and Wales.

Practising at the employed Bar allows for the development of a broad range of skills. Barristers in employment often lead large teams of lawyers and non-lawyers. Many have responsibility for determining policy, setting standards and contributing to the legislative process. Some manage very substantial budgets. Some employed barristers in Government influence the creation of policy and the implementation of new legislation and are accountable to Parliamentary Select Committees. The legal advisers to the Boards of some of the largest corporate and financial services entities in the world are employed barristers.

Many employed barristers are especially skilled advocates. They appear regularly in the Higher Courts. The CPS, the Financial Services Authority and the Armed Forces extensively deploy their staff as advocates. Employed barristers continue to develop new markets for advocacy. Many excel as persuasive advocates outside the courtroom: in international forums; in arbitration; in persuading regulators to take or not to take certain actions; or in presenting a client’s position to the media.

Practising as an employed barrister offers opportunities for accelerated career progression and usually greater financial certainty than the self-employed Bar in chambers. Some employers will fund training and entry to the Bar. Some employers largely, but not exclusively, in the public sector can accommodate flexible working and career breaks. Financial services institutions may offer the opportunity to work internationally and positions are often very well remunerated.

At present, there are relatively few pupillages available in the employed sector and a high proportion of employed barristers undertake their pupillage, and sometimes their early years of practice, in chambers before making the transition to employment. Most employed pupillages are currently offered by the CPS or the GLS. Information can usually be found on their websites.

The employed Bar offers a wide variety of challenging, enjoyable and rewarding work, often combined with early responsibility and the potential for a high profile within the employing organisation. Entry to the most highly coveted Government Departments, law firms and institutions is extremely competitive and most will require a very good academic record and evidence of a commitment to a career in the field you have chosen. However, intellectual ability alone is insufficient for most employers who will expect successful candidates to demonstrate that they are team players, have management potential, are able to inspire others and are able to function well within a large organisation. Employers invest considerable resources in recruitment, training and retention of the right people. However, there is also now more movement between self-employed and employed practice, in both directions, and this growing trend for transferability seems set to continue for the foreseeable future, enabling barristers to develop a wide range of skills and expertise.
Profile of Rosalind Avis

CPS Hampshire & Isle of Wight

As a child I remember arguing and being told that when I grow up I'd make a good barrister, and thus the seed was sown! Once I'd set my heart on this career I chose subjects at GCSE and A level, with this goal in mind. After a gap year, I started at Cardiff University and graduated with a 2:1 in 2004. I continued onto the BVC where I achieved a ‘Very Competent’. It was then that the elusive hunt for pupillage began.

I was extremely fortunate to be offered two pupillages, one in chambers and the other in the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), so I made a very conscious choice between the self-employed and the employed Bar. I chose the CPS because I wanted to specialise in criminal law rather than developing a mixed practice. I was acutely aware of the precarious financial nature of being self-employed and the CPS offers important benefits such as holiday and maternity pay; flexible working hours; pensions; continuous training and the ability to transfer areas. For me, the CPS is in an exciting period of change, having taken over charging from the Police and continuing a strategy for in-house advocacy. Joining as a pupil has meant that there are fantastic opportunities to be a part of these developments.

Having qualified in July 2008, I am now a Senior Crown Prosecutor spending most of my time in the Magistrates’ court. I deal with a whole range of cases and when not in court, I am either writing charging advices or reviewing files.

I was determined from a young age that I wanted to work as a barrister in the Criminal Courts and was aware that to be in with a chance of succeeding, I needed to work hard academically as competition is fierce. I needed to gain experience in public speaking and debating; undertake copious amounts of work experience/mini-pupillages whilst also maintaining outside interests, which would not only balance the academic side but also provide me with something unique to discuss in interviews.

During the BVC, I had amazing tutors who not only encouraged me but also gave excellent training and advice. The Inns are also an amazing resource which, with hindsight, I would have turned to for support earlier.

My role and duty within the courts is the same as any other barrister, although perhaps there is a greater volume of work because as a Prosecutor you are responsible for all the cases in the list that day, whereas the defence will probably only have one. As a result, I have had excellent training and had to learn to think quickly on my feet. I really enjoy being involved with a case from the very beginning, charge to sentence, something that I would never do if I were in chambers.

The next stage for me now is to progress to working in the Crown Court, and who knows where this exciting and fulfilling career will take me!
Facts, figures and useful information

- The Bar Council and Inns of Court provide a wide range of information, advice and guidance. They can also recommend reliable external sources of information.

Facts and figures

- Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) for the academic year 2007/08, 2,864 students applied and 1,749 were enrolled.
- In 2008, 1,720 students were Called to the Bar of whom 48% were male and 52% female.
- In 2007/08, 561 pupillages were registered in the 1st Six period; 51.2% of the pupils were male and 48.8% female.
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) pupils accounted for 23.3% in 2007/08 compared with 23.9% of the total in 2006/07.
- At December 2008 there were 12,136 barristers in self-employed practice; 68.9% were male, 31.1% were female.
- At December 2008 there were 3,046 barristers in employed practice; 53.7% were male, 46.3% were female.
- The four Inns of Court offered scholarships and awards totalling well over £4 million in 2009/2010.
- During 2007/08, 68.4% of those in pupillage studied at universities other than Oxford or Cambridge.
- The fees for the 2008/09 Bar Professional Training Course ranged from £9,650 – £15,045.
- The average cost of completing the vocational stage of training is estimated at well over £20,000, if living expenses are taken into account.

Recommended sources of further information

Information from the Bar Council, the BSB and the Inns

- www.barcouncil.org.uk – the Bar Council’s main website including details of its structure and committees and also information on a career as a barrister.
- www.barstandardsboard.org.uk – the Bar Standard’s Board’s website contains further information on education and training requirements.
- The Inns’ websites (www.lincolnsinn.org.uk; www.innertemple.org.uk; www.middletemple.org.uk; www.graysinn.org.uk) provide information about how to become a barrister, how to join an Inn, scholarships and student barrister (BVC/BPTC) qualifying sessions.

The Bar Council and the Bar Standards Board publish a wide range of booklets including:

- The Academic Stage Handbook
- The Equality Code for the Bar, and the Students’ Guide to Equal Opportunities and Pupillage

Further reading and suggested sources of information

- www.prospects.ac.uk – Graduate careers advice. (see also Prospects Law Publication)
- www.thelawagency.com – Legal recruitment agency with opportunities for law degree and BPTC graduates requiring work experience.
- www.simplylawjobs.com – Legal jobs for law students and qualified lawyers
- www.targetpupillagefair.co.uk (01491 826262) – Graduate careers advice and National Pupillage Fair registration (see also Target Law publication)
- also see websites of Inns of Court
Timetable and checklist

• If, after reading this brochure and other information, you have decided that a career at the Bar is for you, this timetable and checklist will show you what steps to take

First-year law undergraduates and second-year non-law graduates
• Find out as much as you can about barristers and opportunities in the legal profession
• Apply for work experience in a set of chambers, other legal employers and solicitors’ firms
• Participate in activities such as mooting, debating etc. Get involved in other extra-curricular activities which will strengthen your communications skills (e.g. acting, journalism, public speaking and volunteering)

Second-year law undergraduate and third year non-law undergraduates

Autumn term
• Attend legal careers events
• Investigate funding possibilities for the next stage, e.g. Inns’ scholarships
• Check closing dates for applications to courses and funding

Christmas vacation and spring term
• Apply for mini-pupillages and other useful work experience
• If applying for CPE or GDL, do so before February closing date
• Attend law fairs and the National and Regional Pupillage Fairs (usually in March)
• Non law students: apply for Inns’ GDL scholarship by 30 April

Summer term
• Enquire about pupillage applications
• Obtain application details for BPTC
• Consider joining an Inn (if a law undergraduate) for information, advice and networking opportunities

Summer vacation
• Undertake work experience, e.g. mini-pupillage and vacation placements in solicitors’ firms

Final Year law undergraduates or non-law graduates on conversion course
• Apply for BPTC (check closing date)
• Research funding possibilities, Inns’ BPTC scholarship deadlines 1st week of November
• Make further enquiries about pupillage – ideally you should already have completed one or more mini-pupillages

Spring term
• Apply for pupillage through the Pupillage Portal. First round applications should be made in March/April
• Attend the National/Regional Pupillage Fairs

Summer term
• Join an Inn by 31 May (compulsory requirement for starting your BPTC)
• Obtain academic stage qualification
• Check progress of the Pupillage Portal applications; attend pupillage interviews (May/June/July)

BPTC year

Autumn term
• September/October – apply for pupillage through Pupillage Portal clearing system (if you were unsuccessful in the first round you can submit your application in the clearing pool)
If many people are to be believed about the exclusive character of the Bar, I should not be here at all! I grew up in a working class area of Bristol. Like many immigrants my parents were hard-working and wanted me to have a good education. I was fortunate to get a local authority scholarship to Bristol Grammar School and from there went to Trinity College, Cambridge. There I read Law and then did an LLM at the University of California at Berkeley.

After my return from the USA I could not afford to come to the Bar so I took a job as a Lecturer in Law at the University of Nottingham for two years. I then studied for the Bar exams and was able to do so as the result of a generous scholarship from the Inns of Court. Lord Justice Bingham chaired the committee which gave me that award. In more recent years I had the honour of appearing before Lord Bingham (recently retired as the Senior Law Lord) and always hoped that I had justified his confidence in me at that early stage.

I did a 12 month pupillage at 4-5 Gray’s Inn Square and then practised there for 10 years. I was helped in particular by a fantastic generation of silks who were then in those chambers: David Keene QC (now Lord Justice Keene), Alan Moses QC (now Lord Justice Moses), Andrew Collins QC (now Mr Justice Collins) and Michael Beloff QC. In 2000 some of us from a variety of chambers decided to form a new kind of chambers to meet the needs of a changing society in a new century. We have a set of "core values": in a nutshell the message they convey is that it is possible to combine excellence at the Bar with social responsibility.

My practice has always been a wide-ranging civil one but I have specialised increasingly in public law and human rights. During my time as a "junior" I was appointed by the Attorney General to the panel of Treasury Counsel who do civil work for the Government. This does not mean that you can’t work for other clients, just that you are eligible to do work for the Government. This can be very interesting and sometimes high-profile work. In 2002, I became a QC and have since continued to do cases for and against the Government. Some of my most high-profile work has arisen out of the Iraq war. I have appeared in the House of Lords (Supreme Court), Privy Council, the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights. But I still do cases in the Employment Tribunal when I am instructed to – that is what the Bar is all about: being there to help your client, whoever they are and wherever their needs may arise.

The work is very hard (long hours are the norm and it can sometimes be difficult to have a weekend off or a holiday) but I cannot imagine myself doing anything else. What I do is not a job but a vocation. As for the future, who knows? I am a Recorder of the Crown Court and a deputy High Court judge. For now, I am very happy to have the best of both worlds: I can sit part-time as a judge and I am able to do some of the most interesting cases that are available for a barrister to do.
Equal opportunities

• The Bar is open to all, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religious beliefs

• The Bar Council’s Equality and Diversity Advisers are able to provide advice on equal opportunities issues

• All BPTC and pupillage providers have equal opportunities policies in place to ensure fair selection and work practices

The Bar Council is committed to equality of opportunity and values the diversity of its membership. Discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or political persuasion is professional misconduct. The Bar Council has an “Equality and Diversity Code for the Bar” which recommends good equal opportunity practice to chambers, particularly in relation to the recruitment of pupils and tenants and the allocation of work.

The Bar is a diverse profession and currently out of 12,136 self-employed barristers, 11% are from a black minority ethnic (BME) background and 31% are women. Employed barristers comprise 20% (3,046) of the Bar of whom 15% are BME and 46% are women.

For further statistical information, please see the Bar Council website: www.barcouncil.org.uk/about/statistics

Mature entrants

If you are coming to the Bar later in life, after a successful career elsewhere, you may not have the same financial problems as recent undergraduates but you will need considerable commitment in overcoming the problems associated with coming to any profession as a mature entrant. You will certainly have something more to offer than standard training and qualifications outlined in this brochure, such as relevant experience, skills and knowledge. Before making personal and financial sacrifices, we strongly recommend you investigate how far your particular range of work experience and qualifications are relevant to a career at the Bar. The Bar values the contribution made to the profession by late entrants who have acquired valuable and relevant experience in other walks of life. In 2007/8, 59 (11.5%) of pupils were 35-54 years of age.

Following the introduction of new regulations on 1 October 2006, it is unlawful for barristers in self-employed practice and barristers’ clerks to discriminate on the grounds of a person’s age. The law states that they cannot discriminate against a pupil or tenant in their chambers, an applicant for pupillage or tenancy, or an employee of chambers, on the grounds of that person’s age, unless the action can be justified. More information relating to the issue of age discrimination can be found on the Bar Council’s website www.barcouncil.org.uk/memberservices/EqualityandDiversity-Helpline or by contacting the Equality and Diversity Advisers (equalopps@barcouncil.org.uk).

From October 2004, the disability discrimination legislation has been extended to cover the recruitment of pupils and tenants in chambers. Reasonable adjustments should be made to working practices and/or features of premises occupied by barristers if a disabled tenant or pupil, or applicant for tenancy or pupillage, would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. Requests for reasonable adjustments should be made direct to the relevant chambers. The Equality and Diversity Advisers can provide confidential advice to anyone seeking a reasonable adjustment. Members of the Bar Council’s Disability Committee are available to offer practical advice on developing a practice with a disability. They can be contacted through the Equality and Diversity Advisers (Tel: 020 7611 1310).

Further guidance

The Bar Council publishes guidance to its members on good practice in the workplace, including maternity leave, paternity leave and flexible working policies to help barristers balance family life with practice at the Bar. A variety of publications are available from the Equality and Diversity advisors, for both students and those in practice. See the Bar Council’s website at www.barcouncil.org.uk for a full list.

If you wish to speak to the Equality and Diversity Advisers there is a confidential line (Tel: 020 7611 1310). Their role is to provide advice to chambers wishing to improve their equality and diversity practice and to barristers, Practice Managers, clerks, pupils, BPTC or law students with equality and diversity problems or queries. They work independently of all other Bar Council departments.
Contact details

• For information on contacting the Inns of Court and the Bar Council see the information below:

The Inns of Court

Lincoln’s Inn
Education Department,
Treasury Office, London WC2A 3TL
Tel: 020 7405 1393
www.lincolnsinn.org.uk

Inner Temple
Education and Training Department,
Treasury Building, London EC4Y 7HL
Tel: 020 7797 8208
www.innertemple.org.uk

Middle Temple
Education Department,
Treasury Office, London EC4Y 9AT
Tel: 020 7427 4800
www.middletemple.org.uk

Gray’s Inn
Education Department,
8 South Square, London WC1R 5ET
Tel: 020 7458 7900
www.graysinn.org.uk

The Bar Council

The Bar Council is responsible for all careers matters. Students are advised to contact the Careers and Information Assistant (email: careers@barcouncil.org.uk) who can provide relevant literature and advise on various aspects of a career at the Bar. Further information is also available on the Bar Council and the BSB’s websites. Students are strongly advised to look at these sites which also give statistical information about the number of BPTC students and numbers of pupillages available.

The General Council of the Bar
289-293 High Holborn, London WC1V 7HZ
Tel: 020 7242 0082 · www.barcouncil.org.uk

The Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn, London WC1V 7HZ
Tel: 020 7611 1444 · www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

Bar Professional Training Course providers

The providers of the Bar Professional Training Course publish their own statistics about the number of students they take on the course each year, and how successful their graduates are at obtaining pupillage or other appropriate positions. Details of the costs of the course at each provider are also given on their websites.

BPP Law School, Leeds
BPP Law School, London
0113 386 8250 /020 7430 2304 · www.bpp.com

Cardiff Law School
029 2087 4964 · www.cf.ac.uk/claws/cpls

City Law School, London
020 7404 5787 · www.city.ac.uk/law/vocational/bvc

College of Law, Birmingham
College of Law, London
0800 015 9519/0800 289 997 · www.college-of-law.co.uk

Kaplan Law School, London
020 7367 6400 · www.kaplanlawschool.org.uk

Manchester Metropolitan University
0161 247 3053 · www.law.mmu.ac.uk/postgrad/BPTC

Nottingham Law School
0115 848 2888 · www.nls.ntu.ac.uk

University of Northumbria, Newcastle
0191 227 3939 · http://www.northumbria.ac.uk

University of the West of England, Bristol
0117 965 6261 x3769 · www.uwe.ac.uk/law/bilp
Appendix 1

The figures below show the BPTC pass numbers and results for 2007/2008. These figures have been provided by the various BPTC providers.

Please note that these figures are provided purely for information. There are wide variations between BPTC providers in such things as the size of the intake of students from overseas and mature students, in the number of students wishing to enter independent practice at the Bar, and in the way that the course is taught and examined. Comparison of the figures for individual BPTC providers may, therefore, not be meaningful. It is important to enquire what they have to offer you.

These statistics have been taken from the BPTC Providers Annual Reports.

### City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>450</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BPP – London

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>297</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### College of Law – Birmingham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### College of Law – London

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percentage of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>266</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>Percentage of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BPP – Leeds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northumbria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UWE Bristol</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manchester Metropolitan University</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nottingham</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cardiff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Competent</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred/Withdrawn</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail/Referred</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

The statistics below show the numbers of students from each BPTC provider who received pupillage in 2006 and 2007.

Students should, however, bear in mind the following when considering these figures:

- They only show pupillages secured in any given year – students from one year’s intake may not register their pupillage until the following year.
- They do not indicate the proportion of international students who returned home after the BPTC or who had no interest in applying for pupillage.
- They do not indicate the areas of legal interest of different student groups and the consequent match with available pupillages.
- They do not show information on students who gained posts in Bar related fields.

Prospective students should seek more comprehensive information about student destinations from their preferred BPTC provider.

The information in the tables below is taken from the Bar Standards Board annual pupillage survey.

**BPTC institute: Route to Pupillage 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BPTC institute</th>
<th>Number of Students Obtaining Pupillage</th>
<th>Number of Students who completed the BPTC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BPP London</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPP Leeds</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWE Bristol</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Met</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumbria</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Law</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSL/City</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>1560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing = Students who did not complete the BPTC and Pupillage question on the Pupillage Supplementary Information Sheet.

**Table showing number of pupils by degree classification:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils 2007/08</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First class degree</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper second class</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower second class</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3

• Important information for those wishing to study for the Bar of England and Wales. This notice is issued jointly by the four Inns of Court, the BPTC providers, the Bar Standards Board and the Bar Council

Is it right for you?

We are very glad that you are seriously thinking of pursuing a career at the Bar.

The Bar can offer an extremely rewarding career if you

• have a high level of intellectual ability
• are highly articulate in written and spoken English
• can think and communicate under pressure
• have determination and stamina and are emotionally robust

Seek advice

Do, therefore, check out the detailed information on the websites on page 24. Remember 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 Entry Test. You should find out as much as you can and give the information serious consideration before committing yourself to the study – and the financial and other expenditure that this requires.

So, to make a realistic assessment of whether you are suited to a career as a barrister you should

• Seek guidance from your university law tutors and careers advisers
• Contact the Inns and speak to their Education staff (they are happy to answer any queries and also organise open days for university students)
• Find out more about the profession and look at the statistical information
• Try to gain relevant experience such as working for a law firm, doing a mini pupillage or marshalling for a judge
• 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. For good candidates, from whatever background, financial support (for example from the Inns of Court, or loans) is frequently available, and the final rewards – both in terms of job satisfaction and financial remuneration – can make it a very worthwhile career.

Statistics

Once you have satisfied yourself you have these qualities, and 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. Detailed statistics are on the BSB website: www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

In brief, approximately 1800 students take the Bar Course every year and, typically, the number of pupillages offered is about 550 each year. Some students return overseas or turn to other professions after the course. However, students are allowed to seek pupillage for up to 5 years after completing the Bar Course, so the competition for pupillages is extremely intense. Over 3,000 individuals may be applying for pupillage in any particular year, and some Chambers have over a hundred applicants for each pupillage placement. At present there are only a limited number of pupillages at the Employed Bar (see the BSB and Bar course providers’ websites for detailed statistics). All pupillages are awarded on merit, only following a fair selection process.

Getting a tenancy

You should also realise that, following pupillage, obtaining 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, and Chambers do not always offer tenancy to their own pupils.
Appendix 4

Practice areas and profiles

Barristers practise in every area of law. Some are increasingly specialised, working in niche areas like intellectual property, sports law, landlord and tenant or construction law. On the other hand, many barristers are generalists, practising in one or more broad fields of law. Details of the main practice areas together with some profiles of practitioners appear below. Please see the Bar Council website for more profiles.

Administrative Law

Sam Grodzinski
The life of a barrister practising in Administrative Law is amongst one of the most intellectually rewarding at the Bar. Cases normally involve challenges to the lawfulness of action by central or local Government, or other bodies exercising public functions over people. If you develop a successful practice in this field, you may well end up being involved in headline-grabbing cases. In recent times, these have included challenges to the legality of the war on Iraq, to the indefinite detention without charge of international terrorist suspects, the right to assist someone who wishes to end their own life, and other cases of national and international importance.

Hearings in the Administrative Court rarely last more than a day or two, and do not normally involve large volumes of documents to be sifted through. They will, however, test your ability to get to the bottom of complex legal issues, and to apply a range of public law principles across a hugely varied set of factual situations. They can cover issues as different as mental health, immigration, prisons, planning, and regulation of the professions. Many will involve issues arising under the Human Rights Act.

In terms of money, a successful barrister in Administrative Law can expect to earn a very good living. Not normally quite as much as the commercial barrister, but probably more than other areas of practice. In common with other areas, however, the life of a public law barrister is rewarding, not primarily in terms of financial reward, but because of the intellectual challenge that it brings and the independent professional career that it allows you to develop.

Chancery/Commercial Law

Chancery and commercial sets have adapted to the competitive market to become dynamic places to work. Chancery and commercial work is intellectually challenging and requires the ability quickly to absorb detailed information and understand factually complex scenarios. Commercial awareness is essential to ensure legal advice reflects the commercial needs of the client. As a very general rule, ‘commercial’ sets specialise in contract law whilst ‘chancery’ sets do more trust work. Company law tends to be more specialised although often commercial and chancery sets also do company law work. As a pupil or junior chancery or commercial barrister you will, in general, be in court a lot less than your peers in other practice areas, and most of your time will be spent undertaking drafting and advisory work.

David Herbert
The Chancery Bar has its geographical and historical heart in Lincoln’s Inn, where I have been in practice at XXIV Old Buildings since 2003. But while its traditional image is easy to define – thanks largely to Charles Dickens’ memorable caricatures and satire in Bleak House and the interminable case of Jarndyce v Jarndyce – the modern Chancery Bar and its practitioners are less easily stereotyped. In the six and half years I have been in practice, I have travelled widely (appearing in court or advising clients in more than half a dozen foreign jurisdictions, as well as throughout the whole of England and Wales), met and worked with a wide range of clients (from high net worth individuals, bankers, hedge-fund investors, and multi-national businesses, professionals ranging from architects to accountants, to pensioners who have lost their savings, householders who have lost their homes, and sole-traders who have lost their businesses), and been involved in cases as exotic as a dispute over armoured vehicles in Baghdad and as strange as the search for an old-master looted by the Gestapo in World War II. There are obviously the less glamorous and more mundane assignments too – but what Chancery practice does not lack is variety.
Cases, one way or another, usually involve businesses or property and that is reflected by the areas of law in which Chancery barristers specialise:

- Company law – for example shareholder disputes, or those involving the duties owed to companies by their directors
- Insolvency law – dealing with the consequences that arise where companies and individuals are unable to pay their debts
- Professional negligence – where professionals, whether solicitors, accountants, surveyors or investment advisors are alleged to have breached duties to their clients
- Trusts – both onshore and offshore
- Wills – involving disputes over legacies and between beneficiaries of estates
- Property law – involving disputes over the ownership of land, concerning mortgages, and between landlords and their tenants, as but a few examples

Chancery practice does not, however, provide the same daily opportunities for court work as other areas of law, notably crime or family law, with a much greater emphasis on documentary and paper-work within the confines of chambers itself. But the opportunity to prepare before a court hearing as a consequence is usually greater – it is not a case of turning up in chambers on any given morning and seeing what briefs have arrived for court that day – so while adrenaline levels may be kept in check, the intellectual satisfaction of properly and rigorously analysing and researching a case, drafting written arguments and then preparing oral submissions for court is all the greater.

It was the intellectual rigour of practice at the Chancery Bar that led me to apply for pupillage in Chancery chambers, and my expectations have not been let down. Getting to grips with reams of factual material, finding and applying the relevant law, while focussing on a client’s commercial dictates can involve incredible hard work and challenges, and involve difficult sacrifices but – in my experience at least – the rewards of an ever-interesting and varied practice are well worth the effort!

Common Law

‘Common law’ chambers offer practice in a wide variety of areas of law with particular emphasis on contract and tort. The current trend is for common law sets to have a number of specialist practice groups so that they allow their members to develop a specialist practice whilst offering expertise across a broad number of legal fields. The precise nature of work will vary with each set, but will inevitably be varied and unpredictable. This means it can be difficult to organise your workload as instructions can arrive at the last minute, leading to late night preparation. Pupils and junior member can usually expect to be in court three times a week and will tend to be involved in small personal injury claims, property disputes and contractual claims.

Criminal Law

Life at the criminal Bar is unpredictable and challenging. This is where the real courtroom drama happens and each case will have its own colourful characters from all walks of life. Criminal barristers must be strong advocates, able to think quickly on their feet, adapt to changing factual scenarios and deftly summarise cases for judges and jurors alike. They must be able to sympathise, communicate and develop an affinity with others. At the junior end, criminal practitioners can generally expect to be in court at least once a day and will often appear in different courts on the same day. This means constant travelling, waiting and long evenings spent preparing for the next day. Criminal law tends to change more often than other areas of law so practitioners must ensure that they keep themselves up-to-date. Current law reforms in this area have also made the future of the criminal Bar uncertain with a notable decrease in prosecution work for private practitioners and some people predicting its demise. However, this is unlikely to deter those with a steely constitution and unwavering passion for criminal law, both of which are requisites for success in this area.

Lesley Bates

Prior to coming to the Bar, I trained as a nurse and worked in two large teaching hospitals in London. I primarily worked with those with HIV/AIDS and other blood disorders and communicable diseases. The work was demanding, emotional, sometimes difficult and frustrating but in so many ways immensely satisfying. All good preparation for a career at the Bar.

I had always wanted to be a nurse and so rather surprised myself when, in 1994 after eight years, I woke one morning and fancied a career change. Having made that decision, I had to re-train and gain some qualifications so I went to night school and then to Kingston University for my law degree. I obtained a First Class Honours degree and then set about applying for the Bar Vocational Course and then pupillage.

I had been led to believe my lack of connection to the legal world, my age and gender might be a disadvantage. Obtaining pupillage was, as it still is, extremely competitive and difficult, but my ‘former life’ and experience proved to be anything but a disadvantage. I was unsuccessful in my first round of applications so worked for a year as a paralegal with a medico-legal team in a large firm of solicitors in the city and set about reapplying for pupillage.

I was fortunate enough to be guided by my Inner Temple mentor, who helped me chose sets very carefully. I knew I wanted to come to the criminal Bar and in October 2000 found myself at the door of 23 Essex Street about to commence pupillage. Chambers is one of the leading criminal sets and, after 6 months, I was on my feet in Magistrates’ Courts across the South Eastern Circuit. An incredibly steep learning curve followed as I began conducting hearings from first appearances to trials. My experiences as a nurse had helped me enormously – it couldn’t be worse than having to tell someone that they were...
dying. That sort of experience proved to be invaluable – not only when dealing with the stress and unpredictable nature of the job but when dealing with difficult, stressed and anxious clients.

In April 2001 I accepted tenancy in chambers and I soon found myself in the Crown Courts, conducting jury trials. Another steep learning curve followed as I grappled with the different environment, different advocacy style and the more complex cases. I developed a practice in cases involving young and vulnerable witnesses and defendants which continues today, although I now defend as much as I prosecute. I also undertake regulatory work for the Nursing and Midwifery Council and the General Medical Council.

Learning curves are something of a norm in this life, for just when you have become accustomed to one sort of case or aspect of work, along comes another bigger, better and more complicated case to keep you on your toes. It is ever thus throughout any barrister’s career it seems. This is a huge part of what I love about the job. There are rarely dull moments and no two days are ever the same.

It is as hard now as it has ever been for those aspiring to a life at the Bar, but we must keep encouraging those who are determined enough to make it. I try to help in as many ways as I can. I recently supported a school at the National Mock Trial competition. It was a delight to see the students working so hard and with such enthusiasm. It was a great experience for them to have appeared at the Old Bailey in wig and gown and before a judge. Some have asked to come and shadow me in court and I hope one day will be appearing for real.

I am often asked why I made the change, and I have yet to find an answer but I have never looked back and have never regretted it. I loved being a nurse, but I love being a barrister more.

**Employment Law**

Employment practitioners deal with claims arising out of the employment relationship as well as matters concerning trade unions. Employment law is predominantly contract and statute-based and practitioners have to keep up to date with the legislative changes and increasing statutory rights in this area, such as age discrimination. Matters concerning the employment relationship can have a personal effect on those affected and practitioners must be able to deal with these matters sensitively regardless of their own beliefs. At the junior end of the Bar you can expect to find yourself spending three to four days a week advocating in a court or tribunal, mostly in employment tribunals. The work can be unpredictable and varied, sometimes requiring last minute preparation and long hours. Whilst this has its own excitement, it can make it difficult to plan your workload and your social life.

**European Law**

European law work is varied as it permeates all aspects of the law. As a result, barristers practising in European law will tend to have a practice in other legal fields (such as public law) with a European focus. There are less travel opportunities than the title suggests and the work will mainly be based in England and Wales, but practitioners may appear in Luxembourg or Brussels. European cases tend to be protracted and practitioners will tend to have several cases at different stages running at once. You will spend a lot less time in court than your peers and at the junior end much of your work will be spent researching technical issues, European Community legislation and case law.
Many of our laws now originate with the European Institutions (or “in Brussels” in the journalists’ jargon). Those laws must be applied by our national courts. Much of my work is in courts in London and around the country. An “EU law case” can arise in any number of contexts, like immigration, unfair competition, VAT or fisheries. Where necessary, questions of EU law also get referred to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Luxembourg. Most of the argument in Luxembourg is on paper, with hearings usually being very short compared to English court cases, but these trips to Luxembourg form a fixed part of life as an EU barrister.

Other cross-border or international cases might involve a conflict between different states’ courts as to where a case should properly be heard, or the recognition and enforcement of a foreign judgment. Beyond that, there is no limit to the possible European and international elements in litigation, especially commercial cases. This can also involve appearing in other countries’ courts under reciprocal rights enjoyed by EU lawyers. There are also direct actions in the European Courts in Luxembourg and sometimes appearances before the European Commission in Brussels.

Two things really set EU law apart from other areas of law: first, it is not really an “area of law” in itself. It cuts across any number of other subjects, and in the course of my work I have found myself in courts on resolving disputes and therefore the practitioner will spend a large amount of their time mediating settlements. Junior practitioners can expect to be in court frequently and pupils will be given their own caseload which is both daunting and exciting. You can expect to travel a lot as a junior practitioner as hearings normally take place close to where the parties live.

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Life as a pupil is akin to taking a headfirst leap through Alice’s looking glass. You become ever curious, often baffled and inexplicably compelled to keep pressing forward. Sometimes you will feel ten feet tall, and others, a mere two inches small.

Your inner “white rabbit”, ever fearful of being late, is a constant companion. Embrace him to avoid complacency and remember to be:

- alert
- helpful
- equipped (checklist: Red Book, notebook, pens and tissues aplenty for a, probably, sobbing client)
- available (with mobile ‘phone at hand and never ignored)

In your first six you must also perfect the curious art of being virtually invisible, yet conspicuously ever present, and undertake any task from bundling to researching and drafting opinions on sometimes obscure points of law. You will become your supervisor’s shadow, gleaning insights into conducting Children Act and Ancillary Relief proceedings whilst hoping to acquire their skills, knowledge and unflappable calm.

Making the transition into your second six will feel a bit like having been taught to swim by watching others, before promptly being thrown into the deep end. Suddenly, you sit at the front of the court. You address the Judge and the client now hangs on your every word.
The work is wide-ranging and you will not be doing back-to-back ex parte injunction applications or interim care order renewals although they are a regular feature of junior family practice. One day your problem-solving abilities will be pushed to the limit over a contentious contact dispute in a decidedly unglamorous County Court – the next, you will be racing to the decadent surroundings of the Royal Courts of Justice to make an urgent application before – yes – a High Court Judge! It can be stressful and the responsibility of playing lawyer, social worker and a therapist to your client can weigh heavily on your shoulders; but it is worth it. It is always as exciting as it is challenging.

As your practice gains momentum, so will your confidence. You will cease to be shocked by anything a client, opponent, or even a judge, throws at you and your focus will shift from trying not to mess up to engineering a creative and enduring solution to a seemingly impossible problem.

So how does it feel to get tenancy and become a ‘proper’ barrister? Remember Alice’s astonishing growth after consuming that magical cake? That’s close.

**Personal Injury and Clinical Negligence**

Personal injury and clinical negligence work encompasses a wide range of factual scenarios including road traffic accidents, occupier’s liability, injury at work and maltreatment in hospitals (also known as clinical negligence). Damages range from compensation for minor injuries to million pound claims for catastrophic injuries. The combination of legal and medical issues makes work in this field exciting and varied. Whilst a medical qualification is not necessary, an interest in medical issues is a prerequisite. Practitioners spend a large proportion of their time considering expert reports and discussing the issues with experts in conference. Clients, especially those with a clinical negligence case, will have been let down by a professional in the past, so the ability to instil confidence and deal with people from all walks of life is essential. Life at the junior end of the Bar is busy and you can expect to be in court each day for matters such as small claims hearings, infant approvals and case management hearings. Senior practitioners will spend less time in court but the cases will be longer and require thorough preparation.

**Public Law**

Public law concerns challenges to the decisions of public bodies in a wide variety of fields from local government planning or housing decisions to central government decisions on asylum or the award of contracts to private bodies. Each area carries its own procedures and case law, making practice in this area varied and interesting, with the opportunity to specialise. Many public decisions, such as those in education or in housing law, have very firm statutory frameworks. In other cases, judicial review will be sought in reliance on case law. The amount of time spent in court can depend on the field in which you are practising as well as the chambers. Juniors may appear frequently in court in their own right in small cases or spend more time researching and drafting for a senior practitioner in a complex case. The nature of the work is, in general, less unpredictable than other areas.

**Property Law**

Daniel Gatty

20 or 30 years ago many barristers practised in several different areas of the law, turning their hand to a family case on one day, a criminal case on the next and a commercial case the day after. Some still do, but many more specialise in one area (or perhaps a couple of related areas). My practice is substantially property based. I am also secretary of the Property Bar Association.

So what is it that a barrister specialising in property does?

He or she will appear as an advocate in a variety of different courts and tribunals. Most readers of this brochure will know of the county courts, the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords, now known as the Supreme Court. But a barrister with a property specialism may also appear in, for example, the Lands Chamber of the Upper Tribunal, the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal, before the Adjudicator to the Land Registry or in arbitrations and mediations.

Advocacy is only part of the job, though. Most property barristers will spend a good deal of their working week (and often weekends!) in chambers giving advice or drafting documents. There will also be meetings with clients and site visits away from chambers – wellies sometimes required!

Most of the time a barrister specialising in property is likely to be instructed by a solicitor on behalf of the solicitor’s lay client, but not always. I, and many other property barristers accept instructions directly from members of the public and also from other professionals such as surveyors.

And what is the subject matter of a property barrister’s work? Well, obviously, it concerns property in some sense (by which I mean land, buildings, etc., not personal property and the like), but you’d be surprised about how many different aspects of property give rise to legal issues. Landlord and tenant disputes feature heavily, whether between landlords and tenants of commercial premises, of houses and flats or of farms. Neighbour disputes over, say, the location of a boundary or whether the owner of one piece of land has a right of way over the land of another are also commonplace. If more than one person owns (or claims to own) a house, say, there is potential for them to fall out over the size of their respective interests in that house. Building developments give rise to a whole host of legal issues. Agreements to sell property sometimes go wrong, and that is another area in which a property barrister might be instructed. There are many other aspects of property and property law likely to feature in a property barrister’s workload, but I don’t want to turn this into one long list. The point is that within the term ‘property law’ is hidden a wide range of interesting, intellectually challenging issues and disputes – more than enough to ensure that life at the property Bar never gets dull.
This booklet is also available in electronic version (PDF) on request, or downloadable from the Bar Council’s website.