

WHAT IS THE TECHNOLOGY & CONSTRUCTION BAR?

THE TECHNOLOGY & CONSTRUCTION BAR is a section of the Commercial Bar which is made up of barristers who deal with cases relating primarily to technology or construction. This covers a broad range of disputes across a variety of sectors.

Construction disputes can arise from projects ranging from those concerning skyscrapers and airports to oil rigs and international football stadiums. Disputes can involve contractors, engineers, architects, government departments and/or financiers. Technology disputes can relate to software, viruses, cloud services, start-ups or blockchain.

Working at the Technology & Construction Bar requires a sharp mind, analytical ability and a good grasp of contract and tort law. Most cases which fall within the remit of the Technology & Construction Bar are heard in the Technology and Construction Court (TCC), which is a division of the Business and Property Courts in the Queen's Bench Division. The TCC deals with around 500 cases and 50 trials each year. In addition to court work, TCC practitioners deal with many disputes which are conducted through domestic and international arbitrations, adjudication and mediation.

USEFUL LINKS

The Inns of Court

<https://www.graysinn.org.uk/>
<https://www.innertemple.org.uk/>
<https://www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/>
<https://www.middletemple.org.uk/>

The Bar Council

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

The Bar Standards Board

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/qualifying-as-a-barrister/>

OTHER USEFUL SITES:

<https://www.lawcareers.net/>
<http://www.socialmobility.org.uk/>
<https://www.pupillagegateway.com/>

WHAT IS TECBAR?

TECBAR

TECBAR is the specialist bar association for barristers who practise in Technology & Construction Law. It was founded in 1983 and now has over 400 members. Membership of TECBAR is open to barristers who have completed pupillage, hold a current practising certificate and regularly work (or intend to work) in the fields of Technology & Construction Law.

TECBAR offers educational and professional development opportunities for members, promotes the Technology & Construction Bar to potential clients (domestically and internationally) and represents members' interests. The Association also publishes the TECBAR Review on a quarterly basis, which includes news, articles and case summaries written by leading practitioners.

For further information about TECBAR, including details of how to contact the committee, please visit our website: www.tecbar.org



junior
TECBAR

Junior TECBAR is a sub-branch of TECBAR which is primarily aimed at pupils and barristers within their first 10 years of practice. Junior TECBAR offers targeted educational lectures, networking opportunities and social events for interested TECBAR members.

TECBAR

THE TECHNOLOGY &
CONSTRUCTION BAR ASSOCIATION



DO YOU WANT TO...

- ...be challenged intellectually?
- ...learn new and interesting things about scientific and technical industries?
- ...work internationally?
- ...work on cutting edge projects?

Then have you considered the
TECHNOLOGY & CONSTRUCTION BAR?

WHY PRACTISE TECHNOLOGY & CONSTRUCTION LAW?

BARRISTERS PRACTISING IN Technology & Construction Law become involved in major national and international projects, such as Wembley Stadium, Crossrail, the Burj Khalifa, Hinkley Point nuclear power station, Heathrow Airport, the Macau Bridge and the London Eye. Further, technological advances such as artificial intelligence and cryptocurrencies like BitCoin and Ethereum make this a rapidly developing and exciting area of law.

In addition to having the opportunity to engage with complex issues of commercial law, practitioners at the Technology & Construction Bar have to grapple with interesting and diverse technical issues relating to the subject matter of the dispute. Technical issues which arise in TCC cases range from those relating to coding of intricate computer programmes to structural engineering questions concerning buildings or bridges and aeronautical engineering theory.

The international nature of construction projects brings the opportunity to work in a number of other jurisdictions including Australia, the Caribbean, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, South Africa, the UAE and the USA.

These are lucrative areas of law due to the high value and often high-profile status of many disputes.

WHAT ARE TECBAR CHAMBERS LOOKING FOR?

CHAMBERS SPECIALISING IN Technology & Construction Law are looking for candidates with much the same qualifications as any other commercial set. The following are some of the key qualities often identified as forming part of chambers' selection criteria:

- Intellectual ability
- Presentation skills (oral and written)
- Sound judgment
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Motivation/a capacity for hard work
- Integrity
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work independently and under pressure

Chambers do not generally require a law degree. Many barristers now at technology and construction specialist sets qualified by undertaking the Graduate Diploma in Law exam. Others moved to the Bar after working for a period of time in another sector (such as engineering or scientific research) or having previously qualified as a solicitor. It is not necessary, however, to have any specialist scientific or technical knowledge in order to undertake pupillage in a TECBAR chambers.

Prospective candidates should be aware that some chambers conduct their pupillage recruitment process through the Bar Council Pupillage Gateway but some do so outside of that portal. Care should be taken to ensure you are aware of relevant deadlines for each chambers to which you wish to apply. Details can be found on individual chamber's websites.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PUPIL IN A TECHNOLOGY & CONSTRUCTION SPECIALIST CHAMBERS

A NEW TENANT in a TECBAR chambers sets out their experience of pupillage and as a junior tenant to give a flavour of the sort of work you could be involved in:

"The first six months is spent primarily shadowing your pupil supervisor. In my experience, this included attending court and conferences with my pupil supervisor. When I was not at court or in conferences, largely I worked on the live cases that my supervisor was working on – this included attempting to draft a statement of case at the same time as my supervisor and then comparing the final result, writing opinions or skeleton arguments and also carrying out legal research.

The subject matter of the dispute varied immensely – a construction dispute, then an IT dispute or a broader commercial dispute. There was also a real variety when it came to the jurisdictions involved – one day it may be a domestic dispute which was being heard in the Technology and Construction Court and another day it would be an international arbitration in the Middle East.

In my second six months, it was a combination of solo court trips (exciting and mildly terrifying in the beginning!) and also continuing to shadow my pupil supervisor. In my second six I also took part in the TECBAR marshalling scheme at the TCC. This gave a great opportunity to see some more advocacy in the TCC but also to gain an insight into a perspective from the bench.

I started tenancy following completion of my 12 month pupillage. The work has been a combination of work in my own right and led work. In terms of the former category I have travelled to courts all over the country. The subject of the disputes tends to be very varied and ranges from more general common law matters to small commercial disputes.

Led work involves being a junior to at least one other more senior barrister. In larger cases there may even be a few junior barristers on the case. In the first couple of years of practice I have been led in construction, IT and general commercial disputes. These have been both arbitrations and court work. The construction disputes have involved both domestic disputes and international disputes concerning projects in Kuwait, Qatar and Yemen. In terms of IT, the cases have varied from disputes involving data breaches, defective IT systems and the use of a robo-advice model – so a great variety!"

