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BPTC Key Statistics 2021

Executive Summary and Covering Note

Executive Summary

- This report provides key statistics relating to students enrolled on the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), which was the vocational stage of training for the Bar, from 2011/12-2019/20. It provides information on demographics and results for those who enrolled on the BPTC from 2017/18-2019/20, and information on those seeking pupillage who graduated from the BPTC from 2015/16-2019/20.
- This is the final edition of the BPTC Key Statistics Report, as from next year, reporting will be undertaken on the new vocational training courses offered for those seeking to qualify as a barrister in England and Wales.

Demographics

- **Overall enrolment:** 1685 students enrolled on the BPTC in 2019/20. This represented a decrease of 68 students from the number enrolled in 2018/19, but an increase of 66 over the number enrolled in 2017/18.
- Of the 2019/20 enrolled students, 1557 were full-time and 128 were part-time on the course. The number of part-time students was down year on year (there were 32 fewer part-time students who enrolled in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19) and has shown a downward trend since 2011/12, when 255 part-time students enrolled on the course.
- **Domicile:** The number of UK/EU domiciled students and the number of overseas students both showed a decrease from 2018/19 to 2019/20 (from 823 to 781 for overseas students, and from 926 to 904 for UK/EU students). Although the reduction was steeper for overseas domiciled students, only 2018/19 saw greater numbers of overseas domiciled students enrolled on the course since the BPTC started in 2011/12. Despite the reduction in the number of UK/EU domiciled students when compared to 18/19, the number of such

students who enrolled in the 2019/20 academic year was higher than that seen in each academic year from 2014/15-2017/18.

- Overall, around 52 per cent of BPTC students enrolled in 2019/20 were domiciled in the UK prior to enrolment, around 1.5 per cent were domiciled in the EU, and 46.5 per cent were domiciled outside the UK or EU. When the BPTC started in 2011/12, overseas students made up around a third of those on the course.
- **Gender:** The percentage of female BPTC students by year of enrolment has increased since the BPTC was introduced in 2011/12 from 52.3 per cent to 57.8 per cent in 2019/20, and by around 1.2 per cent since 2018/19. In 2019/20, 56.5 per cent of overseas students, and 58.9 per cent of UK/EU students had declared their gender as female.
- **Ethnicity:** In 2019/20, there was a decrease in the proportion of UK/EU domiciled students from a minority ethnic group on the BPTC in comparison to White UK/EU domiciled students. 35 per cent of UK/EU students who enrolled in 2019/20 of the 95 per cent who provided information on ethnicity were from a minority ethnic background. This was down by around five percentage points compared to 2018/19, around one percentage point compared to 2017/18, and was at the lowest level since 2015/16. The majority of 2019/20 overseas domiciled students were from an Asian ethnic background (around 87 per cent of overseas domiciled students).
- **Disability:** Around 21 per cent of UK/EU domiciled students and five per cent of overseas domiciled students who enrolled on the BPTC in 2019/20 and who provided information on disability status had declared a disability. The figure for UK/EU domiciled students was around seven percentage points higher than that seen for 2018/19 enrolled students.
- **First degree classification:** Around 31.5 per cent of UK/EU domiciled students who provided information on degree classification and enrolled on the BPTC in 2019/20 had gained a first-class degree; 58 per cent of them had gained an upper-second

class degree; seven per cent had gained a lower-second class degree, and around 3.5 per cent had another degree classification.

- Of UK/EU students, the proportion enrolling on the BPTC with a first-class degree has increased by just over 10 percentage points since 2011/12, and the proportion with a lower second class degree has decreased year on year over the same period by around nine percentage points.
- Around 12 per cent of overseas domiciled students who enrolled on the BPTC in 2019/20 had a first class degree (compared to two per cent in 2011/12). The proportion of overseas students with a lower second class degree upon enrolment has decreased from around half in 2011/12 to around 27 per cent in 2019/20.

BPTC outcomes: as of May 2021

- **UK/EU students:**
 - Around 52 per cent of full-time UK/EU domiciled students that enrolled in 2019/20 had passed the BPTC as of May 2021; with the remainder mostly yet to complete the course. This was around 18 percentage points lower than the comparative figure for those enrolled in 2018/19 at the equivalent point in 2020. It is clear that the impact of COVID-19 has affected the proportion of students completing the BPTC in the 2019/20 academic year.
 - Of those that completed the course, around 22 per cent received an Outstanding, around 70 per cent received a Very Competent, and around 8 per cent received a Competent overall grade.
 - For 2018/19 enrolled UK/EU domiciled students (including part-time), around 73 per cent had passed the course, around 20 per cent were yet to complete it, and around 4 per cent had failed the course; an additional 2.5 per cent had withdrawn from the BPTC.
- **Overseas students:**
 - Around 49 per cent of full-time overseas domiciled students that enrolled in 2019/20 had passed the course as of May 2021; with

the remainder mostly yet to complete the course. The proportion of those that had passed the course was around 11 percentage points lower than at the equivalent point in 2020.

- Of those that had passed the course, around three per cent received an Outstanding, around 68 per cent received a Very Competent, and around 29 per cent received a Competent grade overall.
- For 2018/19 enrolled overseas students (including part-time), around 76 per cent had passed the course, 18 per cent were yet to complete it, and just under 5 per cent had failed it.

BPTC graduates who have commenced pupillage: as of March 2021

- Overall, around 39.5 per cent of UK/EU domiciled BPTC graduates who enrolled on the course from 2015/16-2019/20 (2015-2019) had commenced pupillage as of March 2021. This is down by around 3.5 percentage points from the equivalent figure for 2014-2018 enrolled students as of March 2020.
- The relevant figure increases to around 49 per cent when looking at those enrolled from 2015/16-2017/18 only, as it can take some time for more recent graduates to gain pupillage. However, it does appear that the impact of COVID-19 has been relatively large on the proportion of UK/EU BPTC graduates gaining pupillage in the two most recent cohort (2019/20), and to a lesser extent for those who enrolled in 2018/19.
- As of 31 March 2021, just 10 per cent of 2019/20 enrolled UK/EU BPTC graduates had commenced pupillage (47 of the 421 in this group). This compares to a figure of around 23 per cent for the 2018/19 cohort as of 31 March 2020 (123 of the 540 in this group).
- As of 31 March 2021, around 32 per cent of 2018/19 enrolled UK/EU BPTC graduates had commenced pupillage (214 of the 675 in this group). This compares to a figure of around 36 per cent for the 2017/18 cohort as of 31 March 2020 (236 of the 661 in this group).

- The likelihood of gaining pupillage varies widely by degree class and BPTC overall grade in particular, with ethnicity and first degree institution also appearing to be influencing factors.
- Those with an Outstanding overall BPTC grade were the most likely to have commenced pupillage. Of those with an Outstanding overall BPTC grade, around 75 per cent of 2015-2019 enrolled UK/EU domiciled graduates with first-class degree, and 70 per cent with an upper-second class degree had commenced pupillage as of 31 March 2021.
- For 2015-2019 enrolled UK/EU BPTC graduates with a Very Competent overall BPTC grade; just under half of them with a first-class degree, 36 per cent of them with an upper-second class degree, and around 20 per cent of them with a lower-second class degree had commenced pupillage.
- The proportion of UK/EU domiciled graduates with a Competent overall grade who had commenced pupillage were far lower (around 20 per cent for those with a first class degree, 8 per cent of those with a 2:1, and around 11% of those with a 2:2).
- **Domicile:** 1251 out of the 1297 BPTC graduates (96.5%) from 2015-2019 cohorts that had commenced pupillage as of 31 March 2021 were domiciled in the UK/EU prior to BPTC enrolment.
- **Gender:** Around 55 per cent of all UK/EU BPTC graduates enrolled from 2014-2018 were female, and 45 per cent were male. Of those from this cohort that went on to commence pupillage, around 52 per cent were female, and around 48 per cent were male. Males with a first-class degree appeared to be slightly more likely than females to gain pupillage when controlling for BPTC grade (except for those with a lower second class degree). The opposite was seen, but with a smaller difference, for those with an upper-second class degree.
- **Ethnicity:** When controlling for degree class and BPTC grade, UK/EU BPTC graduates from minority ethnic backgrounds who enrolled from 2014-2018 were less likely to have commenced pupillage than those from White backgrounds. For example, of UK/EU domiciled BPTC graduates with an upper-second class degree and Very Competent overall BPTC grade, 41 per cent of them from White backgrounds had commenced pupillage, compared to around 23 per cent of those from a minority ethnic background with the same degree class/BPTC grade. The relative differences by ethnicity across degree class and BPTC grade are also present when further controlling for ranking of first degree institution.
- **Disability:** For UK/EU domiciled BPTC graduates with an upper second class or lower second class degree, it seems that similar proportions of those with a declared disability and those without a declared disability gain pupillage once BPTC grade is taken into account. For those with a first class degree, slightly greater proportions of those without a declared disability who enrolled between 2015-2019 had commenced pupillage: This difference was not present in last year's Key Statistics report, which looked at those enrolled between 2014-2018.
- **First degree institution:** When controlling for BPTC overall grade and first-degree classification, those who attended universities classified in the Top 10 in the UK according to The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide, were more likely to have commenced pupillage compared to attendees of universities classified in the next forty; who were in turn more likely to have commenced pupillage than those attending other universities.
- For example, 52.5 per cent of 2015-2019 enrolled UK/EU BPTC graduates with an *upper second class degree* and *Very Competent* BPTC grade who went to a UK university ranked in the *top 10* had commenced pupillage as of 31 March 2021. In comparison around 44 per cent of those with a *first class degree* and a *Very Competent* overall grade on the BPTC who went to a university ranked *11-50* in the UK had commenced pupillage.

Introduction to the BPTC Key Statistics report

This report provides key statistics relating to students enrolled on the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), which was the vocational stage of training for the Bar, from 2011/12-2019/20. The BPTC was delivered at a number of universities across England and Wales, and the data in this report reflect data submitted to the Bar Standards Board by these BPTC providers as of May 2021.

The BPTC was delivered in a range of ways:

- full-time over one academic year, or part-time over two academic years;
- as a stand-alone qualification or integrated with a qualifying law degree (as offered by the University of Northumbria at Newcastle).

From September 2020, the BPTC was replaced by a number of different courses authorised by the Bar Standards Board which all lead to Call to the Bar. Details about training to become a barrister in England and Wales can be found [here](#), and details on which providers have been authorised to provide training to become a barrister in England and Wales from September 2020 can be found [here](#).

This report is divided into four parts:

- Part 1** Key statistics aggregated for all providers (full-time and part-time BPTC students);
- Part 2** Key statistics by provider (full-time BPTC students);
- Part 3** Key statistics by provider (part-time BPTC students);
- Part 4** BPTC graduate progression statistics - both aggregated and by provider (full-time and part-time BPTC students).

The BPTC cohorts included in Parts 1-3 are as follows:

- 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 full-time students;
- 2017/19, 2018/20, 2019/21 part-time students, with data on student demographics only for those in the 2019/21 cohort, as results are not yet available for this cohort.

In Part 4 the 2015/16 and 2016/17 full-time and 2015/17 and 2016/18 part-time cohorts are also included in order to give a more detailed picture of statistics on pupillage for those who have graduated from the BPTC.

Important notes regarding data use and interpretation

In some instances, we have not been provided with information on some students regarding their characteristics and/or BPTC outcomes. Such cases are not represented in charts throughout the report if applicable. Including instances where there is no information on a characteristic/outcome can make it difficult to compare between years and cohorts for the categories being presented.

From 2016/17 the rules on the number of re-sits allowed per student for each module on the BPTC changed. Previously students were only allowed one re-sit per module, but from 2016/17 students have been allowed two. This means as of the time the data for this report were collected, there had not been enough sittings for it to be possible for any 2019/20 students to fail the entire course via failing exam sittings. This affects the comparison between years for the charts on BPTC outcomes.

Please take into consideration the difficulty in comparing data between years; the data refer to cohorts enrolled at different points in time and this affects the proportion of students yet to complete the BPTC and the relative proportions of those achieving each overall grade, withdrawing from, or failing the BPTC, as well as the amount of time those that have passed the course have had in which to gain pupillage.

It should also be noted that it is worthwhile to refer to the x-axis of the charts representing student numbers in order to get a better context of the size of the cohort being represented.

Please also take into consideration the difficulty in drawing inferences from these data, as there are many factors involved in determining student success on the BPTC as well as progression onto pupillage following completion of the course.

Owing to a discrepancy in the data, throughout the report the domicile data used for 2017 enrolled students at BPP institutions are that which was provided to us by students when taking the BCAT.

Data presentation

The data in the main body of the report (Parts 1-4) are presented in charts with most measures indicating both numbers and percentages of BPTC students. Providing both helps to illustrate population size and give greater context to the percentages displayed.

The raw data can be found in the appendices in an anonymised form, in compliance with the anonymisation code of practice outlined below. In the appendices, where we do not have data (either because the provider did not collect the data, or the student did not provide the data) we have used the words "Not provided". However, in the charts, we have not included individuals where data on one or more characteristics have not been provided, as including it would lead to greater difficulty in making direct comparisons between groups.

In this report "Not yet complete" means the student has either not taken all the assessments, not passed all the assessments, deferred one or more assessments to a future year, or been permitted to suspend their studies and resume at a specified point. Students who have withdrawn from the course have not completed all the assessments and therefore have no overall grade. In cases where charts relate to students domiciled in the UK/EU or overseas only, this refers to the region in which the student was domiciled prior to enrolment on the BPTC. The domicile codes used in the aggregation of the data are taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The terminology used in chart titles regarding domicile is as follows:

- UK/EU domiciled students;
- Overseas domiciled students;
- Students from all domiciles.

Regarding changes to this report, Chart 2.A.6.2 has been taken out this year, owing to small numbers of UK/EU students with a lower second class degree at the majority of BPTC providers.

Data sources

The data in the report were collected from:

- Individual BPTC providers;
- the previous BPTC online applications system, BarSAS, and
- pupillage registration data from our database.
- Data collected through the Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT) (solely for previously mentioned 2017 domicile data for some BPP students).

Validation has been carried out on returned data based on comparisons against data already held by the Bar Standards Board and by asking BPTC providers to verify the information that was provided.

We have taken considerable care and attention in the compilation of the data provided to us and we have sought to provide a purely objective presentation of the data. Missing data and/or new information received may affect the representation of the data presented in this report and efforts will be made to incorporate any such data in future reports. Despite our best efforts and quality control procedures, mistakes can happen. When they do, corrections will be made in a timely manner, announced and clearly explained to users.

Data protection and confidentiality

We take our responsibilities for data protection very seriously and have made every attempt to make sure that individual students cannot be identified from the data included in this publication. We have adhered to the *Anonymisation: managing data protection risk code of practice* report from the Information Commissioner's Office, (November 2012) and applied anonymisation techniques where appropriate.

An outline of the anonymisation process is given in Appendix II.

The data in this report were compiled by staff of the Bar Standards Board. Providers were given the opportunity to validate the data they submitted.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the course providers for their cooperation in providing the majority of data used in this report.

Key to providers of the BPTC

Code	Name of provider	Law school webpage	Notes
BPP	BPP Law School	https://www.bpp.com/courses/law	In 2019/20, BPP offered the BPTC at five sites: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, London and Manchester. The course at BPP Birmingham started in September 2015, and the delivery of the BPTC at BPP's Bristol site commenced in September 2017.
CAR	Cardiff Law School	www.cardiff.ac.uk/law-politics	
CLS	City Law School, The	https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/law	
MMU	Manchester Metropolitan University	https://www.mmu.ac.uk/law/	
NTU	Nottingham Law School	https://www.ntu.ac.uk/study-and-courses/academic-schools/nottingham-law-school	
UNN	University of Northumbria at Newcastle	https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/academic-departments/northumbria-law-school	
UOL	University of Law, The	https://www.law.ac.uk/	In 2019/20, The University of Law offered the BPTC at three sites, London, Birmingham and Leeds. The course offered at Leeds started in September 2016.
UWE	University of the West of England	www1.uwe.ac.uk/bl/bls	

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