



REGULATING BARRISTERS

Annual Report on Bar Training

January 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Board with strategic oversight of the operation and outcomes of Bar Training. The report draws together the work of teams from across the organisation.
2. Last year's report on Bar Training was the first 'business as usual' report following the implementation of training reforms and covered the period from September 2022 to November 2023. This report covers the period from December 2023 to November 2024.

Executive Summary

3. The report offers the Board insight into how standards in Bar training during both the vocational and pupillage components have continued to be set, met, and assured specifically in the following ways:
 - (a) how the four key principles of Bar Training (Flexibility, Accessibility, Affordability and High Standards) continue to be sustained in the delivery of Bar Training and in our decision-making and further developments;
 - (b) how the processes for authorising, assessing, monitoring and evaluating Bar Training are working;
 - (c) how we have dealt with issues that have arisen during the year.
4. The report indicates a range and variety of measures of assurance that are in place to give the Board confidence that regulatory oversight of Bar training is being managed in a way that ensures the integrity of delivery by the training providers. We indicate where further detail can be found, should any Board members wish to explore a particular topic in more depth.

Key points

High standards

5. Maintaining high standards for qualifying as a barrister is essential to enabling the Regulatory Objectives and the needs of consumers to be met. Some of our key stakeholders express the concern that we do not do enough to maintain high standards. In particular, they say that too many students are entering the vocational component of training (post-graduate Bar courses) with limited chance of success in passing the Bar course and in obtaining pupillage. They argue that, as well as exploiting students, this negatively impacts student experience for all, and standards of training are suffering as a result. There is also criticism of the variation in pass rates between Bar training providers.
6. Our view is that the evidence does not support anxiety about standards. The work that the teams do to ensure that high standards are maintained (as well as the other principles of accessibility, affordability and flexibility) are described in the report, but of particular note are the following:
 - (a) Our thematic review provides assurance that:
 - the Bar course providers' admissions policies and procedures continue to meet the standards required in the BSB's Authorisation Framework;

- they enable standards to be maintained once a student is admitted; and
- systems are in place to ensure that each student develops to their full potential, whatever their starting point.

Our data does show that some students with 2.2 degrees (our minimum entry requirement) do go on to secure and to successfully complete pupillage.

(b) Assessment standards are rigorous:

- In the core knowledge subjects (Criminal and Civil Litigation in vocational training and Professional Ethics in pupillage), assessments are set and marked centrally by the BSB, working with a team of expert and experienced examiners.
- In the skills subjects (Advocacy, Professional Ethics, Conference Skills, Legal Research and Opinion Writing, and Drafting) standards of assessments that are set and marked locally by the vocational Bar course providers are monitored by a team of external examiners, who report directly to the Supervision team.
- We have introduced a new framework to ensure that standards of, and outcomes from advocacy training in pupillage are consistent.

7. Our records show that the majority of students historically (around eight in ten) did go on to pass the former BPTC course, and we are monitoring outcome data for the new courses that were introduced after the Bar training reforms in 2020 (the first cohorts have not yet exhausted resit opportunities).
8. It is not the BSB's role to limit ambition and demand, provided that prospective students are well-informed about their prospects. The Legal Services Board's statutory guidance on education and training requires that regulators place no inappropriate direct or indirect restrictions on the numbers entering the profession. We provide information on our website for prospective students to enable them to understand their chances of success, both in the vocational Bar courses, and in progression to pupillage. Success rates for pupillage applications show that in the 2020/21 cohort of students, slightly under half of home-based course graduates (46 per cent) have moved onto pupillage. Many overseas students enrol on the Bar courses for reasons other than progressing to pupillage; our latest statistics show that overseas students now form the majority.

Accessibility

9. The BSB believes that the Bar should be inclusive and reflect the diversity of society across all levels of the profession. Our equality objectives are to:
 - (a) clarify the BSB's expectations of the Bar concerning equality, diversity and inclusion and to highlight opportunities for change;
 - (b) hold the Bar to account for reducing racial and other inequalities across the profession;
 - (c) promote a culture of inclusion at the Bar and in legal services more generally; and
 - (d) build a diverse and inclusive workforce ensuring that the BSB is itself an example of the approach the BSB is promoting.
10. Our equality strategy sets out how we aim to meet those objectives which include: encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession; eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

11. Subject to maintaining standards and providing good information about prospects, we want to maximise opportunity. Key initiatives are:

- (a) This year we worked with BPP to open up further opportunities for students to take resits up to the five-year limit that we set for completing the vocational Bar courses. The data shows that 48 more people have been able to be Called since the introduction of this initiative.
- (b) We are working with interested parties to develop an Apprenticeship route to the Bar. We recently reached a key milestone with the publication of the Barrister Apprenticeship Standard, which is based on our Professional Statement. It is now open for interested providers to propose a model for authorisation by the BSB.

12. We recognise that accessibility remains a challenge in certain key areas. In particular:

- (a) Our 2024 statistics report shows that differential outcomes for some ethnicities persist, most notably for black students. This is not unique to Bar training, and we are closely following the research being led by Exeter University and the SRA into this area.
- (b) Our 2024 research shows that barriers in recruitment to pupillage persist and, despite progress that has been made both through specific initiatives and through organic change, there is some way to go to achieve more diverse outcomes. This was a topic of discussion at our Bar training conference in 2024 and we are currently consulting on changes to our Equality Rules.
- (c) Across vocational training and pupillage, providers are reporting a growth in requests for reasonable adjustments, and increasing complexity. It is important that disabled students who meet the admissions criteria are enabled, by means of reasonable adjustments, to acquire, demonstrate and apply the knowledge and skills set out in the Professional Statement. However, providers and students are increasingly turning to the BSB for guidance about what is considered reasonable in the context of professional practice, so we anticipate returning to this topic in 2025.

Looking forward

13. In 2024, we initiated a reform programme across the BSB, which includes reorganising our structure in order to clarify accountabilities in the teams responsible for all aspects of Bar training, and consolidate them into the Regulatory Standards Department, empowering staff to be effective in fulfilling our regulatory objectives. The reform process has commenced with the recruitment of key posts under way. The Department will have responsibility for:

- The regulatory policy framework for professional standards in education, training and continuing competence. We will be reviewing our regulatory tools - the Authorisation Framework, the Professional Statement and Curriculum and Assessment Strategy - to ensure that they remain fit for the future and reflect any changes in best practice since they were introduced with the reforms in 2019.
- Authorisation of providers of Bar training (vocational and pupillage, including apprenticeships) and considering waivers from the qualification rules.
- Centralised examinations.
- Supervision - gathering intelligence and promoting compliance with regulatory standards to reduce actual and potential harm to consumers.

VOCATIONAL COMPONENT

14. Since implementation of training reforms, we have authorised ten providers across 21 locations.
15. No new providers or new sites at existing providers have been authorised in the past year.
16. We continue to engage closely and regularly with vocational training providers through our quarterly Bar Training Forum and at the annual Bar Training Conference. These fora provide opportunities for sharing of best practice, for ensuring that there is a common understanding of our requirements, and therefore help to promote consistency of student experience across training providers. In the period covered by this report, subjects for discussion have included:
 - Academic misconduct
 - Re-use of assessments
 - Sampling techniques for assuring quality in assessment decision making
 - The operation of Exam Boards
 - Pupillage and Fair Recruitment
 - An introduction to Neurodiversity and ADHD
 - Accent diversity at the Bar
 - Bar Training for pupillage: from the classroom to the courtroom
17. Where workstreams across the BSB are likely either to be of interest to or to impact on training providers, we ensure that they are aware of them. For instance, the 2024 Bar Training Conference featured research work led by our Strategy and Policy department on pupillage and fair recruitment, as well as input from the research team into the discussion panel dedicated to that subject at the Conference.

HIGH STANDARDS

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmark

18. BSB staff attend various seminars in order to stay abreast of developments in education and training. One of these was an event organised by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to consider how Higher Education providers work with professional bodies such as the BSB, following a survey¹ that they conducted with members to learn more about the relationship colleges and universities have with the professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) who accredit their provision.
19. We have benchmarked ourselves against their findings and concluded that we are meeting or exceeding standards in the areas of:
 - the pace of change in subjects at authorised training providers;
 - frequency of reauthorisation;
 - the role of external examiners in assuring standards; and
 - flexibility that supports pedagogical development and innovation.

¹ https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/members/how-he-providers-work-with-professional-bodies.pdf?sfvrsn=f2babb81_3#:~:text=Higher%20education%20providers%20have%20a,of%20the%20PSRB%20qualification%20requirements

Authorisation

20. While we did not receive any authorisation applications from new vocational providers this year, we will continue to consider requests, when they are received, from vocational training providers for material changes to individual assessments of their authorised Bar courses and to their modes of delivery.
21. The current Authorisation Framework and Curriculum and Assessment Strategy were first published as part of the Bar training reforms. Whilst some changes have been made, for example to reflect certain areas of policy development, they have not been subject to a full review and are therefore (in line with good practice) now due for review. Providers' contracts are expiring in 2025. We have agreed with them to extend their existing contracts, subject to appropriate checks and balances, to allow us to conduct a review of these documents ahead of re-authorisation. Providers will continue to be subject to our usual monitoring arrangements during this period.

University of Hertfordshire

22. The University of Hertfordshire was granted authorisation by the Bar Standards Board in November 2021 to deliver vocational Bar training, and the University went on to commence its first Bar course in September 2022. Last year, we took the decision to vary its authorisation with conditions, meaning that its September 2023 intake was deferred, initially to January 2024.
23. In December 2023, a decision was taken to further vary the University's authorisation because the BSB deemed that the conditions set in August 2023 had not been fully met. In April 2024, the University provided sufficient evidence to the BSB that demonstrated it was able to meet all of the remaining conditions, and that it was ready to recommence delivery of the Bar course. In June 2024, the University was notified that it could recommence delivery of the Bar course in September 2024, although certain conditions were set as part of the BSB's monitoring activity.

Centralised assessments

24. We have now had 12 sittings of the centralised assessment in Civil Litigation that was introduced in December 2020. (The format of the centralised assessment in Criminal Litigation did not change in the Training reforms.) Since their inception, the Bar Training centralised litigation assessments have been sat 25,750 times in total, and 7,251 times in the academic year 2023/2024. This includes all first sit and resit attempts by Bar Training students as well as attempts at the exams made by Bar Transfer Test (BTT) candidates from April 2022 onwards; by continuing BPTC candidates since August 2022; and by Bar Training candidates enrolled on the Bar Training Resit (BTR) Programme since December 2023.

Cohort	Number of attempts at Centralised Assessments since December 2020	Number of attempts at the Centralised Assessments in 2023/2024 Academic Year
Bar Training (excluding BTR)	24,502	7,135
Bar Training Resit Programme (BTR)	116	116
Total Bar Training	24,618	7,251
Bar Transfer Test (BTT)	677	211
Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC)	455	107
Total Non-Bar Training	1,132	318
ALL COHORTS	25,750	7,569

25. Over this year, the Bar Training passing rates have varied from 45.3% for Civil Litigation in August 2024 to 60.2% for Criminal Litigation in April 2024. Rather than using a fixed pass mark or a passing quota, we apply a Standard Setting Process² to ensure that the total score required to pass a particular examination paper consistently measures the same threshold standard of competence at every sitting. This means that passing rates may fluctuate between sittings due to the variable composition of the cohort, but we can remain confident that those who have passed the exams at any point have been assessed against a fixed standard applied equally to all candidates.

26. Our long-serving Independent Psychometrician has retired this year, stepping down after the conclusion of the August Exam Boards. Our previous Independent Observer has been recruited into this role and has had a hand-over period with his predecessor. Following a competitive recruitment process, we have successfully appointed a new Independent Observer, who started in September 2024.

27. The whole cohort passing rates for each of the two litigation subjects across the last three sittings held to date are as set out in the table below.

	Aug-24	Apr-24	Dec-23
Civil Litigation			
No. of candidates	1013	1,779	839
Passing rate	45.3%	59.7%	53.0%
Criminal Litigation			
No. of candidates	1034	1,773	813
Passing rate	47.5%	60.2%	55.1%

28. We have continued to publish a Chair's Report³ after each sitting of the Litigation assessments which details the quality assurance processes undertaken, as well as how the passing standard has been set with reference to the threshold competencies the

² <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/static/514638a6-383c-40b2-8fc2dd8b2fe83585/20220819-Standard-setting.pdf>

³ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/static/2ef6f376-43fe-4fe4-b1784e8c4a0ece68/April-2024-Litigation-Chairs-report.pdf>

litigation exams seek to measure. The report notes the performance of the cohorts at each course provider and trends over time. The report also sets out the role of the exam board and the overall operation of the assessment, and summarises the psychometric data, feedback from vocational training providers, and other sources of information which informed the Exam Boards' deliberations. The independent observer for centralised exams and the independent psychometrician attend final exam boards and have approved our processes and methodologies. The independent observer also attends subject boards and approves the proceedings, he may also attend standard setting meetings and reports on this process at board meetings.

29. Earlier this year, the Chair of the Centralised Exam Board, all the examiners for Civil Litigation and Criminal Litigation, the Independent Psychometrician, the Independent Observer, and the BSB Exams Team held a meeting to discuss and evaluate the validity, reliability, effectiveness, and fairness of the current format of litigation exams and to review a range of proposals of potential changes to the format of assessment. The overall conclusion was that, while innovation and continuous improvement are important, there was consensus that the current format of both examinations is appropriate and there was no strong justification for introducing significant changes at the present time. We will continue to keep the exams under review and to consider a range of potential improvements.

Locally set assessments

30. In addition to the centralised assessments, students take assessments that are set and marked by the training providers (Advocacy, Professional Ethics, Opinion Writing and Legal Research, Drafting, and Conference Skills). We appoint External Examiners (EEs) to provide us with assurance on the consistency of standards of the assessments set by the training providers. They assess whether:

- the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly in line with our Curriculum and Assessment Strategy; and
- the standards and the achievements of students are consistent between training providers.

31. Results across the five subject areas where assessments are locally set and marked demonstrate consistent pass rates at most training providers, with the spread of marks (where applicable) distributed appropriately between 60 to 100%. For example, in most cases the mode scores lie between 60 and 69%, with significantly lower numbers of students scoring less than 50% or more than 90%⁴.

32. The Supervision team holds regular subject lead meetings, drop-in sessions and other training for our External Examiners, and has implemented a new mentoring programme for newly appointed External Examiners. This programme has been successful particularly in supporting new External Examiners coming direct from practice at the Bar, with less academic experience compared with those External Examiners already working in higher education institutions.

⁴ For further statistics on results course provider, refer to our report: <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/static/d3f657bd-3eb7-4984-903da4d6824fdd02/Bar-Training-2024-Statistics-by-course-provider-FINAL.pdf>

33. In September, we issued overall subject reports to training providers for the academic year 2023-24, describing areas of good practice and areas where improvements could be made across all subject areas. The themes emerging from these reports clearly indicated that, generally, assessments were of high quality, appropriately challenging and in line with the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy and Professional Statement.

Risk assessment and monitoring of standards in the delivery of courses

34. In the Supervision Team, our assessment of risk is formed using information we gather to determine whether a regulatory response (such as a visit) is needed. The information we gather is taken from a variety of sources, including:

- Reflective reviews submitted by training providers.
- Reports from External Examiners.
- Data that we collect, such as those reported in the key statistics reports.
- Reports from students and other stakeholders who have a concern about a training provider.

35. During the year to 31 August 2024, we received eight reports, mostly from students, regarding concerns about three training providers. The reports portrayed the following themes:

- two were about the training provider failing to accommodate reasonable adjustments;
- two were about the training provider making administrative errors, causing students to be inadvertently removed from their course;
- two were about perceived poor quality of course materials;
- one concerned the security of a locally set assessment being compromised; and
- one concerned the inappropriate administration of a locally set assessment.

36. In addition to raising these matters with the providers concerned and setting appropriate actions, the information pertaining to these cases has been added to the risk profiles of each provider.

37. We monitor risk profiles of training providers on an ongoing basis in response to issues arising. Each year we review the indicators and refine them as part of our continuing improvement process. As at October 2024, the risk rating of the ten training providers comprises one at High risk, five at Medium risk and four at Low risk. Of these:

- two providers have moved from Low to Medium risk as a result of issues that arose and the providers are carrying out appropriate actions to mitigate and manage these risks;
- two have remained at Medium risk while they continue to carry out actions set for them by the BSB;
- four AETOs remain at Low risk; and
- one is rated as High risk while it demonstrates that actions taken in response to previous concerns are being addressed and embedded.

We will continue to monitor these providers closely until their internal systems and procedures satisfy our regulatory requirements.

Thematic Review of vocational training providers' admissions arrangements and how they support student progression

38. The aims of the thematic review were:

- (a) To review training providers' admissions policies and processes to obtain assurance that they meet the standards required in the Authorisation Framework.
- (b) To review training providers' policies and processes to obtain assurance that they enable standards to be maintained once a student is admitted and that systems are in place to ensure that each student develops to their full potential, whatever their starting point.

39. The background to the review was informed by the following context:

- The greater flexibility introduced as a fundamental part of the Bar training reforms in how courses are designed and implemented.
- Themes emerging from research and reports conducted and published by the BSB, including data on results and student progress at each training provider.
- The removal of the Bar Course Aptitude Test (BCAT) and concerns expressed by some stakeholders.
- Research carried out by the SRA on differential attainment.
- The Authorisation Review of the rules and decision-making processes for the academic component of Bar training.

40. It was agreed that an in-depth review of how training providers manage recruitment and support for students on the Bar courses would help to provide assurance that rigorous admissions procedures and high standards in Bar training are being maintained in a supportive and inclusive learning environment, wherever students choose to study.

41. The review concluded that:

- The entry requirements that are set for prospective students to register for the Bar courses are appropriate and in line with the Authorisation Framework.
- Training providers administer the admissions procedures in a robust manner and staff undertake appropriate eligibility checks. Admissions staff are trained to conduct eligibility checks and have appropriate internal and external stakeholders with whom to engage.
- In general, training providers adopt a whole institution approach to admitting and supporting students on the Bar courses to meet their potential. The way in which they do this aligns with good practice as identified in the literature review.
- Most activity undertaken by training providers in maintaining standards is appropriate and successful. However, there are areas requiring further exploration, such as providing students with sufficient and consistent feedback.
- There is evidence that training providers provide students with support to progress their careers both during their Bar course and many months after their course has been completed, signalling a dedication to assisting students with their onward career. However, there is also some work to be done in raising standards in this area and there is an opportunity for the BSB and training providers to collaborate further on this.

42. The report is published [here](#).

Bangladesh test centres

43. Some students choose to sit their vocational Bar training exams in their home country. Generally, these are students who are resitting their exams and have therefore left the UK at the end of their course. We ceased to permit the use of online delivery platforms by Bar training providers in May 2023, so these assessments are sat in person, in assessment centres, typically those run by the British Council.
44. Due to the state of civil unrest in Bangladesh over the summer, all British Council offices there closed temporarily. We closely monitored the situation for candidates intending to sit centralised exams and some local assessments there in August, and were in close contact with the vocational training providers to understand how many students were affected and to make sure that they were, in so far as possible given the local situation, in contact with the affected students about what this meant for them and what alternative arrangements were available to them.
45. We published three announcements in August to keep everyone informed, culminating on 14 August after we received information from the British Council in Bangladesh that it had not re-opened. We therefore took the difficult decision to cancel the centralised exams on 19, 21 and 23 August in Dhaka and Chittagong to ensure the safety of students and all those involved in running the examinations, and to provide certainty to students who were affected.

FLEXIBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Bar Training Resit (BTR) Programme

46. Last year, we reported on the disconnect between local resit policies relating to the academic awards at some training providers and the allowance of unlimited resits within five years of enrolment specified in the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy (CAS) for the Bar training element of the new vocational courses. We also discussed emerging evidence of the differential impact which limiting resit attempts has on candidates who share certain protected characteristics, and we announced our intention to pilot a new programme with BPP University to offer further attempts at Bar Training Assessments on a non-award basis. The pilot was run in December 2023 and was successful. In February 2024, we announced that BPP was permitted to offer this programme on an ongoing basis to Bar training candidates who have been withdrawn from a course at any provider which limits resit attempts.
47. Take-up for the programme has been steady, with a total of 135 candidates entering for a Bar Training Assessment through the BTR across the three available exam cycles to date (the Winter 2023 pilot, and: Spring 2024; Summer 2024). There are a further 93 Bar Training Candidates who have expressed an interest and have registered for a mailing list in relation to upcoming exam cycles.

Exam Cycle	New BTR candidates entering	Number completing on 1st BTR attempt	Single exam cycle completion rate	Number completing over multiple BTR attempts	Cumulative completion Rate
Winter 2023 (pilot)	19	6	31.6%	5	57.9%
Spring 2024	49	17	34.7%	3	40.8%
Summer 2024	67	15	22.4%	--	22.4%
Total	135	38	28.1%	8	34.1%

48. We now have the earliest BTR completion rates as final results of both localised and centralised Bar training assessments from all three exam cycles have been confirmed by the AETO Exam Boards. Of the 135 candidates who have been entered for at least one assessment through the BTR, 46 have since passed all outstanding Bar training assessments and become eligible for call to the Bar. Bearing in mind that all Bar training assessments require demonstration of the same threshold standards of competence to achieve a passing mark, this group represents 46 Bar Training graduates who have met all the same requirements as their peers, but who would not have been called to the Bar without this opportunity. The quotes below from a BTR candidate who has completed Bar training through this route illustrate the impact of this flexible approach to resits:

“I’m writing to express my most sincere thanks... I am over the moon to say I have now passed the Civil exam, and I am now eligible to be called to the Bar this summer! ... I feel that the programme has been a huge success and would love to see it remain a permanent feature for students in the future.”

“I have since been called to the Bar and currently work as a County Court Advocate, in Court most days of the week in preparations for pupillage applications next year.”

49. It should be noted that not all candidates on the BTR will attempt all outstanding assessments at their first exam cycle, so the group of eight candidates in the table above marked as completing over multiple attempts includes both candidates who previously failed an assessment while on the BTR as well as candidates who attempted different assessments at different cycles. Similarly, the 89 candidates who are yet to complete all outstanding assessments includes those who have not yet attempted at least one of these assessments.

50. To date, 86 candidates have attempted one or both of the centralised vocational assessments while enrolled on the BTR (24 attempting both; 37 attempting Civil Litigation only; 25 attempting Criminal Litigation only). 52.5% of those sitting the Civil Litigation exam and 40.8% of those sitting the Criminal Litigation exam have since been deemed 'Competent' on one of their attempts.

Assessment	Number of BTR candidates attempting the assessment	Of Whom Deemed Competent	Of Whom Remaining Not Yet Competent	Cumulative BTR Passing Rate for this Assessment
Civil Litigation	61	32	29	52.5%
Criminal Litigation	49	20	29	40.8%

51. The tables on the following page match candidates who have attempted a centralised assessment via the BTR back to their first attempt at that centralised assessment while enrolled at their original AETO. The first table shows all Bar training candidates attempting centralised assessments via the BTR; the second table shows only those who have passed the given centralised assessment on one of their BTR attempts. These tables show, first, that Bar training candidates from all intakes to-date remain interested in completing their outstanding assessments and qualifying as barristers. The data includes candidates previously enrolled on a Bar training course at 15 different AETOs, and these candidates' first attempts at the centralised assessments cover a range which includes all sittings from the first sitting of the new Bar training assessments in December 2020 up to the December 2023 sitting. Secondly, and more importantly, these tables demonstrate that these candidates, when given the opportunity to pursue the resit attempts permitted by the CAS, are able to successfully meet the required standard. Candidates whose first attempts cover all sittings between December 2020 and August 2023 have since been deemed competent on a further sitting of the same assessment taken via the BTR.

All BTR candidates who have attempted a Centralised Assessment matched to first attempt at that same assessment at original AETO										
Exam	Number of Candidates Whose First Attempt Was									
	Dec-20	Apr-21	Aug-21	Dec-21	Apr-22	Aug-22	Dec-22	Apr-23	Aug-23	Dec-23
Civil Litigation	6	10	4	6	13	1	2	17	2	0
Criminal Litigation	3	2	1	5	18	2	2	13	2	1

Candidates who have passed a Centralised Assessment via the BTR matched to first attempt at that same assessment at original AETO

Exam	Number of Candidates Whose First Attempt Was									
	Dec-20	Apr-21	Aug-21	Dec-21	Apr-22	Aug-22	Dec-22	Apr-23	Aug-23	Dec-23
Civil Litigation	3	4	3	3	5	0	2	10	2	0
Criminal Litigation	0	1	0	2	9	2	1	5	0	0

52. The first Bar training cohort, which enrolled in September 2020 and sat their first centralised assessments in December 2020 or April 2021, will reach the end of the five-year time limit for completion in September 2025. This will mean that near the time of the next of these reports we will have the first final results for candidates on the new Bar training courses. We hope to re-examine at that point completion rates, taking into account the introduction of the BTR Programme. We also aim to look closely at the performance over time of NTU's first intake, NTU being the only AETO to have fully implemented the CAS' specified resit allowance for their Bar training courses for all intakes. This will allow us to make a further assessment of the effect of this policy. Over the next year we also hope to carry out more detailed investigations of progression into pupillage and the profession with reference to resits taken during the vocational course. We will also revisit the data presented in the previous iteration of this report which indicated that limiting resit opportunities has a differential impact by protected characteristic and assess whether the more flexible approach at NTU and the introduction of the BTR has led to better parity of outcomes.

Outcomes

53. The BSB has a statutory duty to encourage an independent, strong, diverse, and effective legal profession and accessibility was one of the four key principles of training reform. Previous BSB research has identified that ethnicity and socio-economic status have a significant impact on students' performance on the vocational Bar training courses and their ability to obtain pupillage.

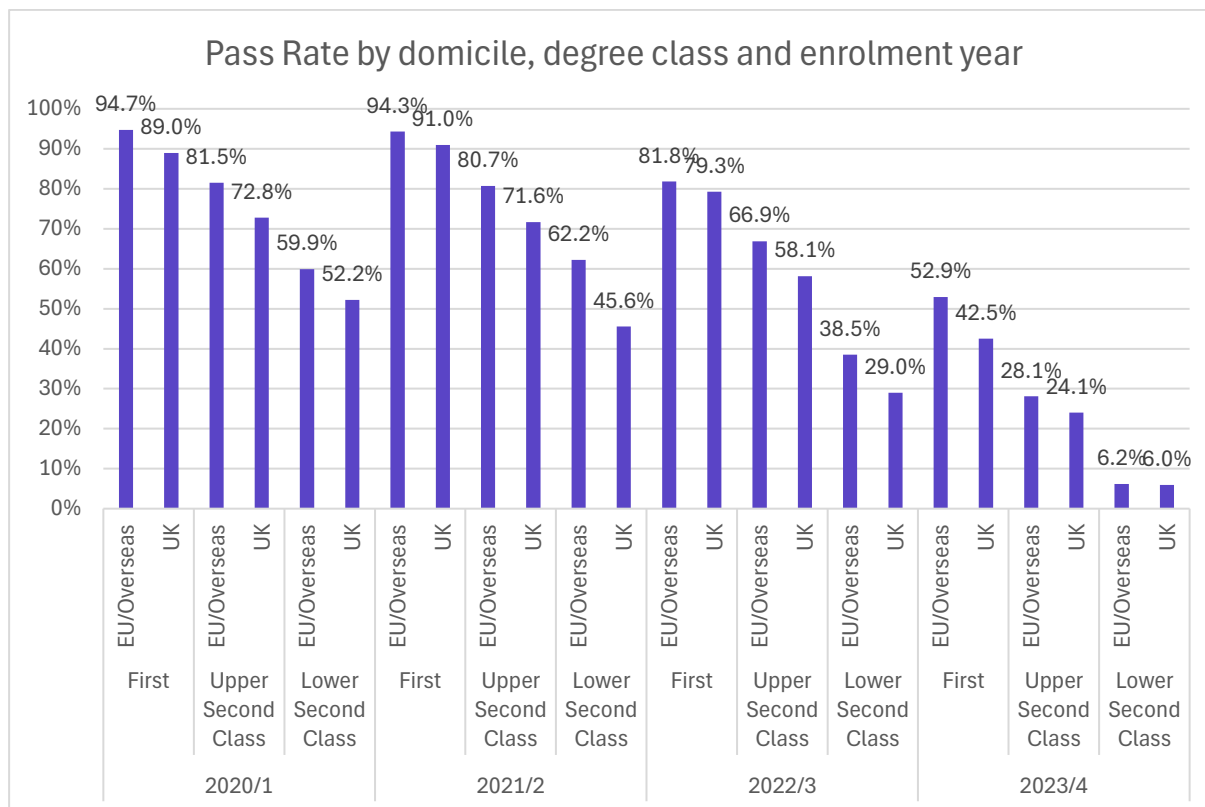
54. The new course does not appear to correlate with any standout changes in the proportions enrolling by demographic (see Annex 2). For the variables we have good data on, there is a continuation of longer-term trends seen throughout the years of the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), and little substantive change this year from earlier cohorts on the new course.

55. Each year, we publish a report ⁵ on key statistics relating to vocational Bar training and progression to pupillage. These reports contain a lot of data about student demographics and performance. Last year we decided to restructure the reports, in particular to provide more accessible information for prospective students that they can use to help inform them about their choice of AETO and their chances of success in obtaining pupillage.

⁵ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/news-publications/research-and-statistics/bsb-research-reports.html>

There are now two reports, one focussing on results by provider, and one covering enrolment, results, and student progression across the course as a whole.

56. The chart below shows pass rates by enrolment cohort, domicile and degree class as of 8th October 2024. Its accuracy depends upon providers having provided us with the most up to date results data.

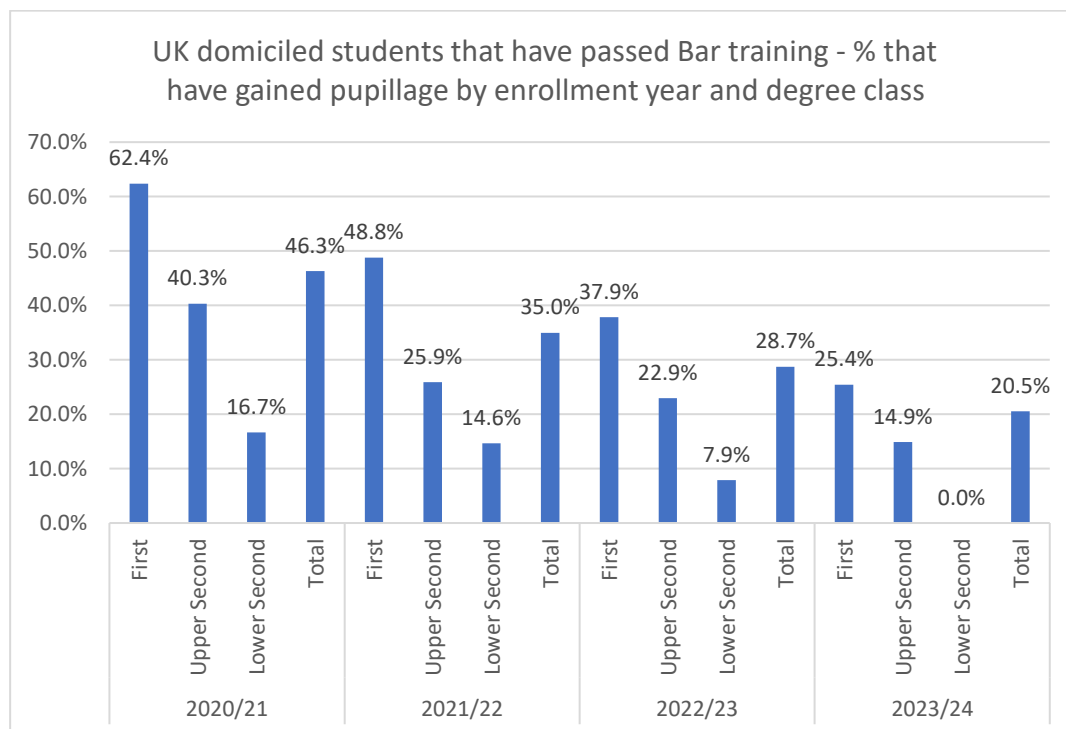
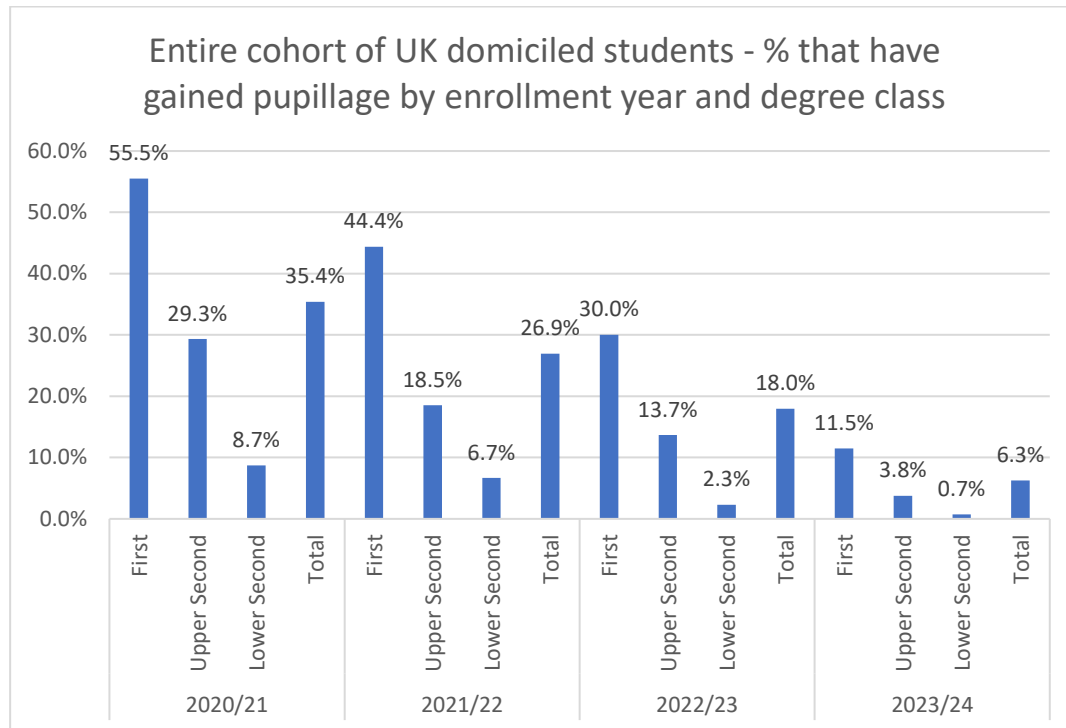


57. As of 8 October 2024, overall pass rates by cohort stand at 76% for 2020/21 enrolled students, 77% for 2021/22 enrolled students, 62% for 2022/23 enrolled students, and 29% for 2023/24 enrolled students. Note that pass rates are lower for more recent cohorts as students will have had less time to retake modules they failed at the first attempt, and results data for the 2023/24 cohort is not yet complete as those enrolled from January 2024 would not yet have been able to sit all modules of the course at the time of writing).

58. Generally, pass rates appear to be quite similar for overseas and UK students (although EU/Overseas students have slightly higher pass rates than equivalent UK students, this is likely to reflect the higher proportions of home students that undertake the course part-time). UK and overseas students differ quite markedly in the proportion that go on to pupillage in England and Wales however. For example, only 2% of overseas domiciled students enrolled in 2020/21 had gained pupillage in England and Wales as of November 2024, compared to over 35% of UK domiciled bar training graduates who enrolled in the same year, though this may reflect the fact that some overseas domiciled students have no intention of practising at the Bar of England and Wales. For those in the same cohort who had completed Bar training, the pupillage rate is 3% and 46% respectively.

59. In addition to differing by domicile, the proportion of a cohort gaining pupillage also differs quite markedly by first degree classification, and university attended. This can be seen in the two charts below, the first of which shows current status for those that gained

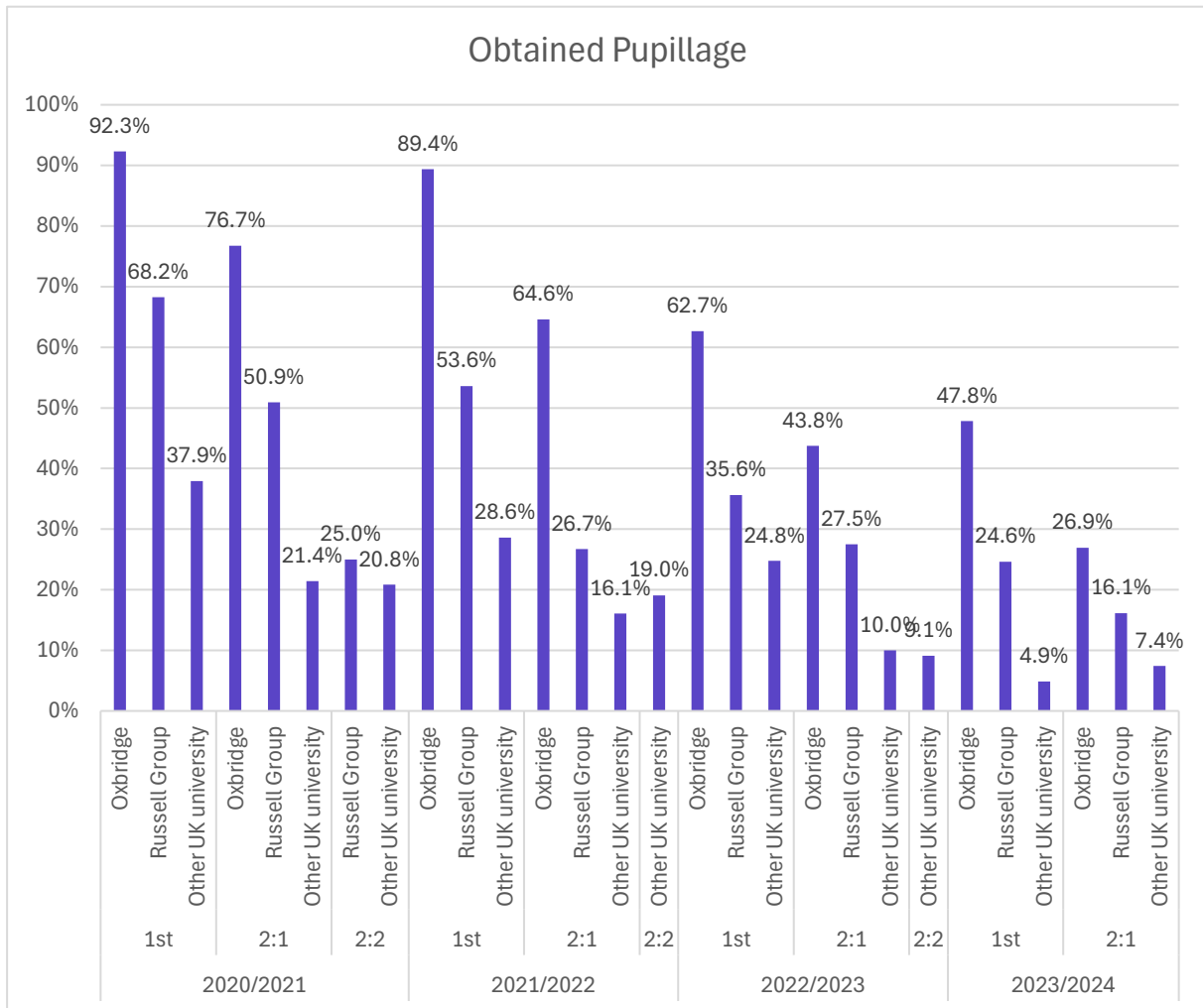
pupillage out of the entire cohort of UK domiciled students, and the second which shows the current status out of UK domiciled students who have completed vocational Bar training only.



60. Most of those that have completed pupillage are currently practising. There are relatively few barristers that have completed pupillage from these cohorts who are not currently registered.

61. Also worth noting is the continuation of a trend seen for those completing the Bar Professional Training Course which presented for the last time in 2019/20 whereby the university attended for undergraduate study shows a strong relationship with the

proportion going on to pupillage. This is shown in the chart below, which relates to UK domiciled vocational Bar training graduates only.



Apprenticeships

62. In November, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) published the [occupational standard for barrister apprenticeships](#) on their website. This significant milestone is the result of several months of engagement with IfATE and the barrister apprenticeship trailblazer group. Prospective providers of barrister apprenticeships can now approach the BSB to begin the process of seeking authorisation as apprenticeship AETOs. Work is ongoing to update and revise policy and process documents to facilitate this and we are continuing to engage with the trailblazer group.

63. In July, the Prime Minister announced the launch of a new body, Skills England, which (inter alia) is set to take on at least some of the responsibilities currently held by IfATE. It has [since been confirmed](#) that IfATE will be dissolved and that all of its functions will transfer to the secretary of state for education, who will then decide what to allocate to Skills England and what to keep for itself. It remains to be seen what impact this may have on apprenticeships as a whole and more specifically for barrister apprenticeships; however, as part of the aforementioned transfer of responsibility, there is to be a review of the access to the apprenticeship levy for level 7 apprenticeships (which a barrister apprenticeship route would be), which may affect the ability of apprentices on some routes to obtain government funding.

AFFORDABILITY

Fees

64. AETOs charge different fees for their Bar training courses. Several differentiate between fees for UK domiciled students and overseas students. The University of Law also has different fees for students attending their London, regional, and Newcastle centres. Current fees information can be found on our AETO factsheet.⁶
65. The cost of courses for the three-step pathway for UK domiciled students in the 2024/25 academic year ranges from £12,150 at Nottingham Trent University, to £18,950 at Cardiff University. For overseas students on the three-step pathway, the course fees range from £17,900 at BPP University to £23,700 at Cardiff University. Of the AETOs offering the four-step pathway, the fees for Part 1 range from £3,075 at Northumbria University to £4,020 at the Inns of Court College of Advocacy (ICCA). The fees for Part 2 range from £9,225 at Northumbria University to £12,061 at the Inns of Court College of Advocacy. The University of Hertfordshire and the University of the West of England are also authorised to deliver the four-step pathway but have suspended this mode of delivery for 2024/25.
66. The majority of training providers have increased one or more of their course fees from those of the 2023/24 academic year, with increases ranging from £250 to £800. The highest of these increases are at BPP University and at the University of Law (London centre fee). Both of these providers raised their PgDip fees by £800.

⁶ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/becoming-a-barrister/vocational-component/aetos.html>

ROLE OF THE INNS OF COURT DURING THE VOCATIONAL COMPONENT

67. The role of the Inns of Court is set out in a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU)⁷ and data share agreement. Anyone starting a vocational Bar training course must become a Student Member of an Inn. The Inns are responsible for student conduct prior to Call and for conducting fit and proper person checks to make sure that only suitable individuals become Student Members and, ultimately, practising barristers. This includes conducting a criminal record check prior to Call (which is conducted through an accredited ‘umbrella body’). The Inns also provide Qualifying Sessions for those undertaking the vocational component of Bar training, in line with the framework set out in the MoU.

68. The Inns Call students to the Bar once the vocational component has been successfully completed. Only those Called to the Bar may call themselves barristers (although only those who successfully complete the pupillage component may apply to us to become practising barristers).

HIGH STANDARDS

69. The Inns submit an annual self-evaluation report, setting out how they have met their obligations under the MoU. We are satisfied that they have met the relevant requirements over the last year.

Criminal record checks

70. Last year we reported that the Inns continue to question the proportionality of the criminal record checks for so many non-domiciled, unregistered barristers who do not plan to practise in England and Wales. This year we have commenced a review of the arrangements and have been consulting about views and options for changes. Feedback is being gathered from a range of stakeholders including the Council of the Inns of Court, the Bar Council, vocational training providers, and HMRC and HM Treasury (given our obligations under the Money Laundering Regulations). The review is expected to be completed this autumn, with the findings and any consequent recommendations then being considered by the Board.

71. In addition, we reported last year that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some international students, or those currently practising overseas who were looking to transfer to the Bar of England and Wales, were unable to comply with the identification requirements necessary for the criminal record checks to be undertaken prior to their Call to the Bar ceremony. We provided a waiver from the requirement to have criminal record checks undertaken for candidates for Call to the Bar in circumstances where it is unlawful for candidates to send original identification documentation from the country where they are residing and/or where a candidate’s circumstances were such that sending their original documents would represent a threat to their personal safety or freedom. This waiver did not remove the requirement for candidates for Call to disclose relevant criminal records on their Call Declaration.

⁷ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/working-with-others.html>

72. This waiver was originally introduced as part of the response to the travel restrictions imposed during COVID-19. However, the Inns have requested an extension to the waiver, pending the above review, as it has emerged as a permanent issue that impacts a number of students, for example those students who have had a criminal background check whilst in the UK, but have since returned to their home countries, but the check is regarded as out of date by the umbrella company that conducts the checks on behalf of the Inns. This also impacts students who have taken longer to complete their resits, which can, in some cases, be taken in certain exam centres overseas. This typically affects students from Pakistan and Bangladesh. This clearly leads to disparity in record checking, but we agreed to extend the waiver pending the above review.

PUPILLAGE COMPONENT

73. This year, we took the decision to authorise, on a conditional basis, the first pupillage provider based outside of England and Wales. This was for a pupillage provider in the United Arab Emirates. The essential resourcing and training requirements remain the same, regardless of the location of the prospective training provider; however, we are keen to ensure that any pupillage provider based outside of this jurisdiction is still able to meet all of the relevant indicators of the Authorisation Framework.
74. The application was approved for one pupillage only, in the first instance, and is subject to a review at the end of the non-practising period to ensure compliance with our requirements, which will be carried out shortly. A further decision will then be taken as to whether this pupillage provider's authorisation may be extended.

HIGH STANDARDS

Strengthening standards through the new Authorisation Framework

75. The process of authorising chambers and organisations previously granted Pupillage Training Organisation (PTO) status in line with the Authorisation Framework was extended beyond the end of 2023 to accommodate the processing of outstanding applications. The transitional process for these PTOs was drawn to a close in July 2024.
76. We have now authorised 274 former PTOs as pupillage providers, in line with the Authorisation Framework. The Authorisations Team is continuing to engage regularly with three PTOs whose applications have not yet been processed fully due to outstanding information needed to confirm compliance with the Authorisation Framework. We anticipate that these applications will be finalised very shortly.
77. The Authorisations Team is now refocussing its attention on chambers and other organisations which have not provided pupillages before and are seeking pupillage provider status. These applications were reprioritised while the team was focussing on the transitional PTO applications; however, the team was able to authorise seven new pupillage providers during the reporting period. The team is now working to assess a further 22 applications, the majority of which are from non-chambers organisations, including law firms and entities.

Supervision of standards

78. In the year to 31 August 2024, Supervision responded to 23 reports relating to pupillage. This compares to 20 in the previous year to 31 August 2023.
79. Of these, nine were referrals from the Authorisations Team, who had identified pupillages being registered with pupil supervisors who had not completed mandatory refresher training when due. Refresher training for pupil supervisors is mandatory every five years, or after three years if they have not been a Pupil Supervisor during that time. The Supervision Team engaged with each of the pupillage providers to ensure that the necessary processes were implemented so that their pupil supervisors receive timely refresher training that meets the outcomes specified in the Bar Qualification Manual.

80. The issue that many providers seemed to face was not planning ahead and only discovering that a barrister was not up to date with their training shortly before they were about to supervise a pupil. It could then be several months before a training course was available with the Inns or Circuits. This year has seen new training providers enter the market with on-demand, online training. Also, one pupillage provider that recruits a number of pupils has launched a new in-house training programme for its pupil supervisors.
81. One case was referred by the Centralised Examinations Team in relation to two pupils at one pupillage provider who both failed their Ethics exam. This is explained below.
82. Of the other 13 cases:
- three related to concerns by pupils about whether reasonable adjustments were appropriately made (this is further covered below);
 - three concerned pupils who had not applied for their provisional practising certificates on entering the practising period of pupillage;
 - five concerned either pupils or pupillage providers raising concerns about signing off pupils who were at risk of not meeting the required competencies in the Professional Statement; and
 - two related to concerns about standards of training.

Pupil Supervisor training

83. We regularly present at the pupil supervisor training delivered by some of the Inns and Circuits to ensure that pupil supervisors understand the regulatory requirements and would welcome the opportunity to do so at others. These forums provide an opportunity for us to meet pupil supervisors and share examples of good practice, as well as the common themes seen by the Supervision team, as set out above.

Professional Ethics assessments

84. We have now had nine sittings of the Pupillage Ethics Assessment, and, in total, we have assessed 867 individual pupil barristers, who have attempted the assessment a total of 990 times (either as a first sit or resit). In 2022, 139 candidates made 146 attempts at the assessment. In 2023, 290 candidates made 323 attempts; and, in 2024, 444 candidates made 521 attempts. The January 2024 sitting involved the largest cohort to date - 344 candidates - which was an increase of 131 candidates compared to the previous January sitting. The numbers taking the assessment will increase again in 2025; as of 23 September 2024, we are aware of 233 pupils eligible to sit for the first time in January 2025. This figure is expected to increase over the course of October and early November as more pupillages are registered.
85. Previously, graduates of the old vocational training component, the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), did not have to take the Professional Ethics assessment during pupillage as they had passed a centralised Ethics exam as part of their BPTC. This year we announced that passing the Ethics assessment during pupillage is a requirement for all pupils unless they have a specific exemption authorised by the BSB. The assumption regarding Transferring Qualified Lawyers (TQLs) is that they will take the Ethics assessment unless they can demonstrate to us reasons for an exemption. These changes are part of our commitment to high standards.

Candidate Journey									
Examination Date	Apr-22	Jul-22	Oct-22	Jan-23	Apr-23	Jul-23	Jan-24	Apr-24	Jul-24
Single-Assessment Candidate Profiles and Outcomes									
Candidates First Sitting ¹	112	21	7	212	44	34	340	58	43
Candidates Resitting	N/A	4	2	1	15	17	4	57	19
Total Number of Candidates Sitting	112	25	9	213	59	51	344	115	62
First Sit Candidates Deemed 'Competent'	107	19	5	196	33	30	277	49	38
Resit Candidates Deemed 'Competent'	N/A	4	2	0	9	15	4	51	18
First Sit Candidates Deemed 'Not Competent'	4	2	1	16	10	3	62	9	5
Resit Candidates Deemed 'Not Competent'	0	0	0	1	6	2	0	6	1
Results Set Aside or Voided ²	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
Single-Assessment Pass Rate	95.5%	92.0%	77.8%	92.0%	71.2%	88.2%	81.7%	87.0%	90.3%
Cumulative Outcomes									
Total Number of Unique Candidates to-date	112	132	139	351	394	427	767	824	867
Cumulative Total of Unique Candidates Deemed 'Competent'	107	130	137	333	375	420	701	801	857
Cumulative Total of Candidates Not Yet Deemed 'Competent'	5	2	2	18	19	7	66	23	10
Cumulative Pass Rate	95.5%	98.5%	98.6%	94.9%	95.2%	98.4%	91.4%	97.2%	98.8%

(1) A Candidate may be recorded as a first sitter more than once, if their earlier attempts were deemed invalid, eg due to extenuating circumstances.
(2) Results may be set aside or voided due to extenuating circumstances or examination misconduct.

Trend Data on Candidate Performance

86. Of the 867 Candidates who have sat the Ethics Exam in pupillage, 857 have been deemed 'Competent', giving a cumulative passing rate of 98.8%. 754 candidates achieved a 'Competent' result on their first attempt at the exam, a cumulative first-sit passing rate of 87.0%. 105 candidates have made at least one resit attempt, of which 103 have ultimately achieved a 'Competent' result following one or more previous valid attempts. This is a cumulative resit passing rate of 98.1%.
87. Of the candidates who have resat the exam, 91 were deemed 'Competent' on their second valid attempt at the assessment. These candidates, taken alongside the 754 candidates who passed on their first attempt, represent 97.5% of all candidates. Which is to say that 97.5% of pupil barristers required to pass this assessment during pupillage have done so within the two attempts which are funded by the profession via the PCF. A further 12 candidates have been deemed 'Competent' on this assessment on a third or further attempt.
88. There remain 10 candidates who have attempted the Professional Ethics Exam at least once but have not yet been deemed 'Competent'.
89. This year, there has only been one case referred to the Supervision Team regarding pupils failing to pass the Ethics exam. There were two pupils at the same pupillage provider who failed their first attempt, which gave rise to concerns as to whether they had been provided with sufficient support. However, both pupils subsequently passed their second attempt at the exam and there was no need for any further action.
90. The drop in the number of pupils failing their exam for the second or third time is encouraging and may indicate that pupillage providers are providing better support with regards to assistance and preparation time. We will continue to monitor whether there are any particular outliers, in particular if there is a pattern of pupils from individual pupillage providers that are repeatedly failing.

91. Pupillage providers are still being signposted to the detailed guidance on our website, with emphasis on the importance of ensuring that their written pupillage agreements include information on the exam and the approach they intend to take should pupils fail.

Curriculum and Assessment Strategy: competence in Advocacy and Negotiation skills

92. As part of our Bar training reforms, our Board agreed a series of recommendations on all aspects of barrister training put forward by our Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR) group, comprising legal education experts. The vast majority of these recommendations have been implemented. The two remaining are to review the requirements for the current compulsory course in advocacy skills during pupillage, and to introduce a compulsory course in negotiation skills during pupillage. The Board agreed that provision of this training should be opened up beyond the Inns and Circuits to encourage innovation, opportunity and wider provision for pupils. We have made further progress with these recommendations during this period.

Advocacy

93. In December 2023, the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy was updated to reflect the new outcomes for pupillage advocacy training and assessment. At the same time, the Bar Qualification Manual was updated to state that from September 2024, any provider of the compulsory pupillage advocacy course needed to be approved by the BSB. The application process included asking course providers to outline their provision and describe their processes relating to assessment, complaints, appeals and ensuring equality of opportunity for all candidates. At the time of writing this report, we have approved all four Inns and three of the five Circuits who currently offer pupillage advocacy training to continue to do so and are working with the remaining two, so that all courses for pupils undergoing advocacy training and assessment, who commenced their pupillages this autumn, will meet the new outcomes.

Negotiation skills

94. We are currently finalising the course outcomes for negotiation skills during pupillage. These consist of three broad areas: negotiation theory, practical skills and assessment via a reflective portfolio. These outcomes have been developed as a result of extensive consultation with negotiation experts, as well as representatives from the Inns, Circuits and AETOs. We have been in contact with two prospective providers of negotiation training during pupillage and both have outlined proposals for delivery of a course that meets the required outcomes. We will continue to engage with these prospective providers to discuss the next steps for implementation, which will likely include a pilot approach for the first year of delivery.

FLEXIBILITY

Centralised exams

95. We continue to offer pupils three opportunities to take the Professional Ethics exam. The examination calendar has now been established with sittings in January, April and July.
96. Candidates are also given a free choice to sit their exam as a remotely invigilated exam or to sit their exam in a test centre. There is no “competition” over available bookings for

either arrangement. Remotely invigilated exams can receive unlimited bookings, and if a candidate who prefers to sit in a test centre cannot find an available centre within the booking platform at a location near them, we are able to work with Surpass to find a suitable venue. To date, we have been able to allow all candidates to book their exam under their preferred arrangements.

ACCESSIBILITY

Bullying, harassment and discrimination

97. No pupils reported concerns about bullying or harassment in the year to 31 August 2024. We have commenced an outreach programme with the profession in line with the recommendations in our report *Addressing Bullying and Harassment at the Bar*.⁸ The programme, which consists of face-to-face presentations and Q&As, is intended to provide information to the profession about how we handle reports of harassment, including sexual harassment, with a view to encouraging such reporting. We are holding events in all six Circuits over the course of this financial year.

Barriers to diversity in recruitment

98. In 2024 the BSB published two pieces of research⁹ looking at pupillage recruitment - a qualitative piece of research looking at the experiences of organisations who have adopted particular approaches to recruitment, and a quantitative analysis focused on recruitment outcomes. The qualitative research was undertaken by Community Research for the BSB based on interviews with pupillage providers and other stakeholders, whereas the quantitative research was undertaken internally using existing data on pupillage providers and pupils.

99. The qualitative research highlighted some of the challenges associated with encouraging greater diversity. Chambers are typically recruiting small numbers of people each year and the people responsible for recruitment tend to have limited time to dedicate to the process. The impact of any changes made to their recruitment processes were also hard to measure as most providers only recruited a small number of pupils each year, so changes were inevitably slow to make an impact.

100. While culture was rarely seen as an outright barrier to recruiting for more diverse outcomes, several pupillage providers did recognise that there could be an issue with affinity bias within their recruitment process. Some pupillage providers noted that while applicants from diverse backgrounds were making it through the initial application and potentially the first interview, for the final interview it became more difficult to ignore the 'polish' of more advantaged candidates.

101. This evidence will be used by the BSB to inform the next phases of its work around access to the profession. We will:

- Work with other stakeholders to identify where the BSB can help support access to opportunities and remove barriers for diverse pupils;

⁸ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/static/81339cf0-2422-4f74-8535b5e37d988793/7e20e7e9-c55a-4c7d-a3785ecd663d9708/Bullying-and-harassment-report.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/news-publications/research-and-statistics/bsb-research-reports.html>

- Continue to monitor changes in the overall profile of pupils as part of our annual reporting on the diversity of the profession and those training for the Bar;
- Consider the findings as part of our review of our Equality Rules and how they can support access to the profession.

Reasonable adjustments

102. A common theme in pupillage cases, continues to be the need to make appropriate reasonable adjustments where necessary to provide the right support for pupils to enable them to successfully qualify as barristers. The Supervision Team has sought to draw focus to this area during pupil supervisor training. Additional guidance has also been added to the Bar Qualification Manual, with emphasis on the factors that pupillage providers should consider in the event that any of their pupils need to take a break from training.

Centralised exams

103. All pupils taking the Professional Ethics exam do so using computer-based testing (CBT) (either at a test centre or at home) with our CBT supplier, Surpass (unless pupils apply to sit a pen and paper exam as an adjustment). We continue to manage the adjustments that pupils need during the exam. We have not received any complaints regarding reasonable adjustments, nor have we received appeals against any of our reasonable adjustments decisions.¹⁰

104. To date, we have implemented 155 agreed adjustments for 110 attempts at the exam; this represents 11% of the total number of exam attempts. It should be noted that some candidates have multiple reasonable adjustments, and some may sit the exam multiple times. There are standard reasonable adjustments which can be accessed by the candidates themselves in the examination platform on the day of their exam, and include variations to font colours, background colours and text/background contrast. In addition to these, the reasonable adjustments implemented by the Examinations Team have included:

- adjustments to the examination timings (eg extra time, additional breaks, a different start time or sitting the exam over two days)
- adjustments to the examination materials (eg use of a different medium such as a pen-and-paper examination or using Microsoft Word rather than the computer-based testing software)
- provision of certain physical facilities (eg a private room, use of a prayer room, ergonomic or adjustable equipment and furniture, step-free or wheelchair accessibility)
- variations to the examination regulations (eg permission to bring medical devices, comfort aids, use of personal laptop, permission to eat or drink during the examination, use of alternative device for remotely-proctored environment check, use of identification document which varies from usual requirements)

¹⁰ Our Adjustments and Other Arrangements Policy can be found here <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/static/fc606779-c7ba-4d48-b9258bc52c2ce000/Professional-Ethics-Adjustments-and-other-arrangements-policy.pdf>

- use of assistive technology (eg screen reading or speech-to-text software)
- specialist support roles (eg professional scribe, professional reader, or presence of candidate's support/care worker).

AFFORDABILITY

Pupillage funding award

105. On 31 October we announced that the rate for the minimum pupillage award, applicable from 1 January 2025, is £24,203 for 12-month pupillages in London and £22,019 per annum for pupillages outside London. The award is set having regard to the Living Wage Foundation's hourly rate recommendation, which was announced on 23 October. The rates in 2024 were £23,078 in London and £21,060 outside London.

ANNEX 1 - ENROLMENT DATA

Chart 1. Bar training pathways offered across AETOs from 2021/22-2023/24

Provider	2021/22				2022/23				2023/24			
	3-step	4-step	LLM	PT	3-step	4-step	LLM	PT	3-step	4-step	LLM	PT
BPP Birmingham	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	
BPP Bristol	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	
BPP Leeds	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	
BPP London ¹¹	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
BPP Manchester	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	
Cardiff University	X		X		X		X		X		X	
City Law School ¹²	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Inns of Court College of Advocacy	X	X			X	X				X		
Manchester Metropolitan University	X			X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Nottingham Trent University	X		X		X		X					
ULaw Birmingham	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
ULaw Bristol	X		X		X		X		X		X	
ULaw Leeds	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
ULaw Liverpool	X		X		X		X		X		X	
ULaw London	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
ULaw Manchester	X		X		X		X		X		X	
ULaw Nottingham	X		X		X		X		X		X	
University of Hertfordshire					X		X		X		X	
University of Northumbria ¹³	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
University of the West of England	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	

Overall

Chart 2 below shows the number of students enrolling in each academic year on Bar training courses from 2011/12 to 2023/24. The charts in this section have been refreshed for year 2022/2023, and now represents a full academic year.

From 2011/12-2019/20 the vocational stage of training to become a barrister in England and Wales was the BPTC. Enrolment on the BPTC declined overall from 2011/12 to 2016/17, and then increased in the last few years of the course. For courses offered from 2020/21 onwards, overall enrolment figures have increased once again compared to the numbers on the BPTC. In 2023/24 there was nearly 10% more students enrolling on Bar training courses than during the 2021/2022 academic year.

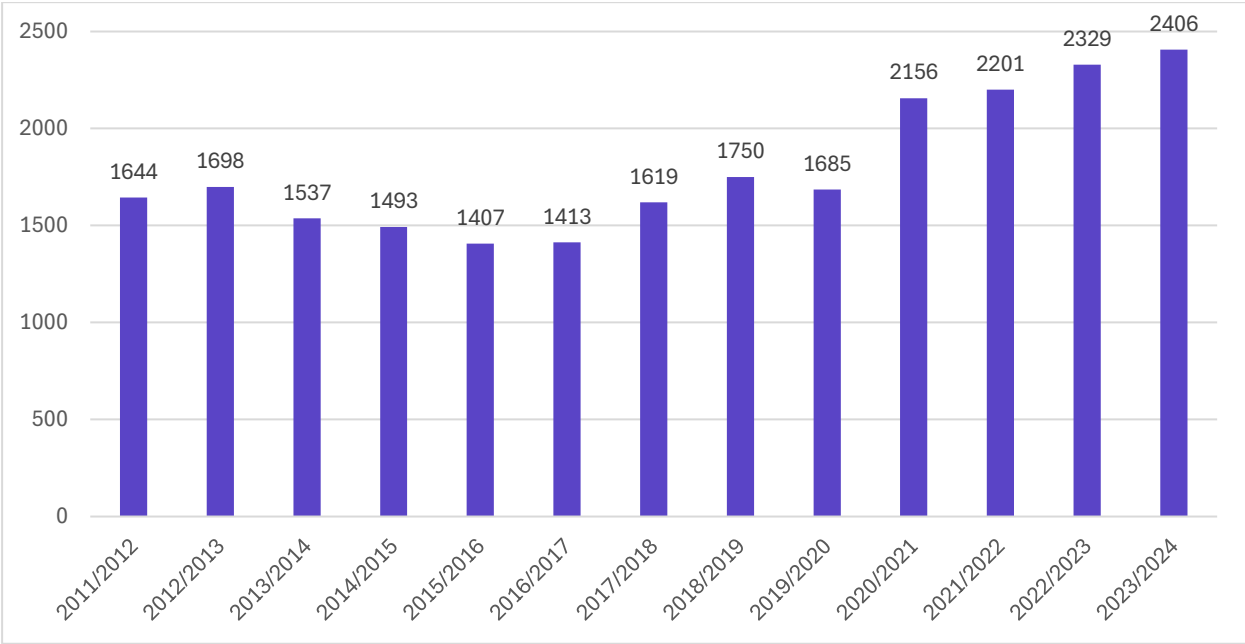
This increase in student numbers may lead to a lower proportion of students going on to pupillage, if the number of pupillages available does not increase proportionately.

¹¹ BPP offers Bar training with a specialist legal studies option as well.

¹² CLS offers a specialist add on to the Bar training course as well.

¹³ UNN also offers an undergraduate degree with vocational Bar training incorporated

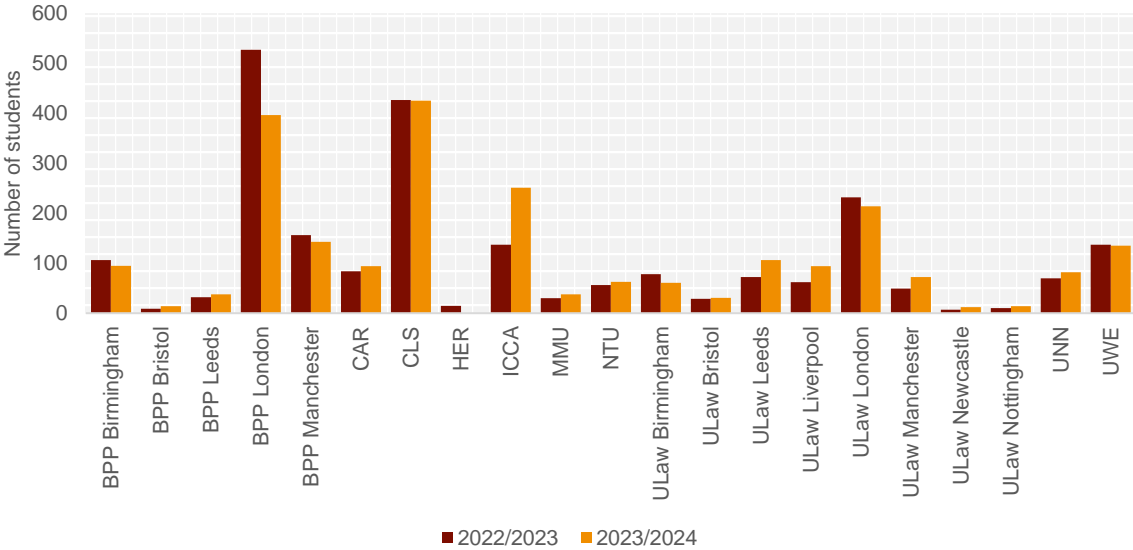
Chart 2. Enrolments by year overall



The largest sites in terms of number of students in 2023/24 were BPP London, City Law School (CLS), The Inns of Court College of Advocacy (ICCA) and ULaw London - enrolment at each in 2023/24 was greater than 200 students. There were also several providers with more than 100 students in the same academic year – BPP Manchester, ULAW Leeds and UWE. The Inns of Court College of Advocacy (ICCA) has approximately 100 more students in 2023/2024 than in 2022/2023.

In 2020/21 the overall number of students based at London providers was 1,214 compared to 942 students based at providers outside London. The comparative figures for 2023/24 were 1,287 and 1119 respectively.

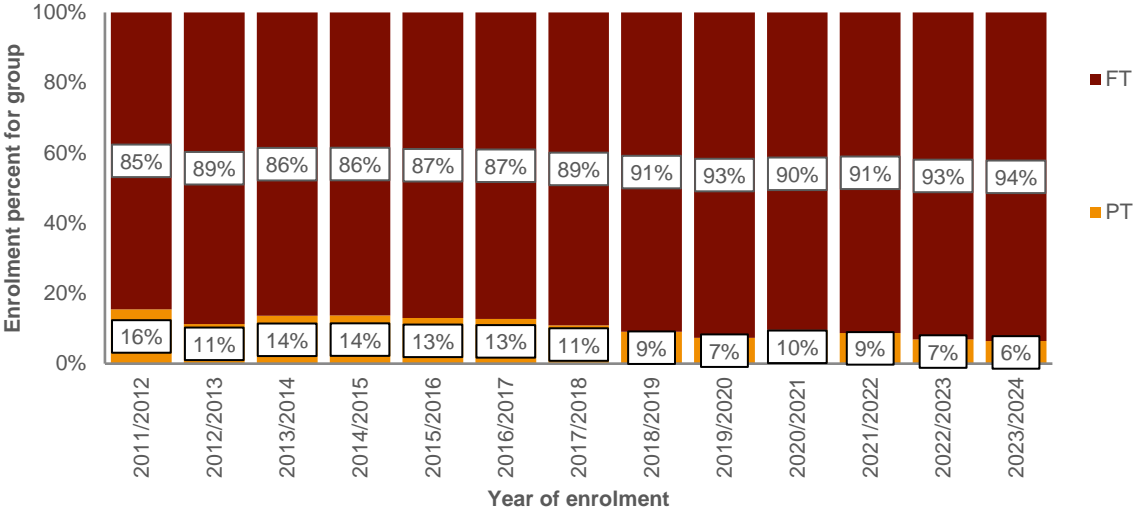
Chart 3. Enrolments by training provider for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024



Study mode and pathway

The chart below shows enrolments for each academic year by study mode (full time or part time).

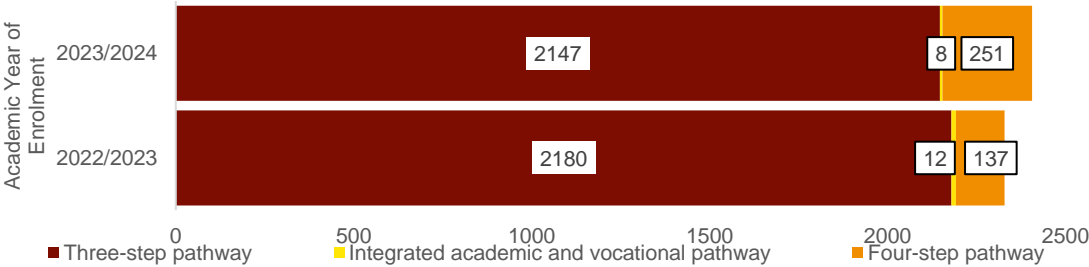
Chart 4. Enrolment on Bar training over time by study mode (% of cohort)



Proportionally the percentage of part-time students has steadily decreased since 2011/2012. This trend could be related to the number of full-time students who are overseas domiciled students, as such students are more likely to study full-time than UK domiciled students.

Chart 5 below shows the number of students enrolling in 2022/23 and 2023/24 by training pathway.

Chart 5. Enrolment on Bar training over time by training pathway (numbers)



The three-step pathway consists of vocational Bar training as a one-part course, and the four-step pathway includes the two-part vocational Bar training course. As shown in Chart 5, three-step pathway is the predominant way of undertaking vocational Bar training. The number of students who enrolled in the four-step pathway has increased by 83% year-on-year.

ANNEX 2 - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- Age** – the age profile of those on the new course is similar to that seen on the BPTC. In 2023/24, around 76 per cent of those that enrolled were aged under 25, 18 per cent were age 25-34 and the rest were aged over 35. This is similar to that seen from 2015/16-2019/20 on the BPTC.
- Disability** - Overall, the proportion of those with a declared disability has remained relatively stable over time, fluctuating at around 10-11% of students.
- Domicile** - The proportion students who are ordinarily domiciled overseas prior to enrolment was around 50 per cent in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This is a similar figure to that seen in latter years of the BPTC (around 48% in 2018/19 and 2019/20).
- Ethnicity** - The majority of overseas domiciled students who enrolled throughout the BPTC, and on the new course, have been from Asian ethnic backgrounds (around 80-90% of overseas students when excluding those that have not provided information).
- For UK domiciled students, the new course has seen a consolidation of a trend seen throughout the years of the BPTC, which was an increase in the proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds over time. Throughout the years of the BPTC the proportion of UK domiciled students from a minority ethnic background increased from around 25 per cent to around 40 per cent (when excluding those not providing ethnicity information). The proportion of such students seen on the new course has dropped from 2022/3 to 2023/4, although it remains higher than it was during the period of the BPTC. increased further to around 48 per cent for 2022/23 enrolled UK domiciled students. Particular increases on the new course have been seen for those from Asian/Asian British backgrounds, and those from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds. Trends over time are shown in the table below, which shows a snapshot of years from 2011/12 onwards.

Course and enrolment year	Percentage of UK domiciled enrolment - excluding those that did not provide information on ethnicity					
	Asian/Asian British	Black/Black British	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	Other ethnic group	Minority ethnic background total	White
BPTC_2011/2012	12.1%	7.7%	3.3%	1.4%	24.5%	75.5%
BPTC_2015/2016	20.7%	8.7%	4.9%	2.6%	36.8%	63.2%
BPTC_2019/2020	18.6%	10.3%	5.2%	1.7%	35.7%	64.3%
New course_2020/2021	18.6%	14.2%	5.9%	2.5%	41.1%	58.9%
New course_2021/2022	22.3%	10.4%	7.0%	2.7%	42.3%	57.7%
New course_2022/2023	26.8%	9.4%	7.7%	3.5%	47.3%	52.7%
New course_2023/2024	22.0%	10.3%	6.8%	3.1%	42.2%	57.8%

6. **Gender** – The proportion of students enrolling by gender appears to have increased in 2023/4, with females representing around 58% of enrolments, compared to 52% in 2022/3. This is in line with the proportions seen on the latter years of the BPTC, but larger than that seen in earlier years on the new course, where this proportion was typically around 52%.

Academic history

7. **First degree classification** - Enrolment by first degree classification on the new Bar training course has shown a continuation of trends seen on the BPTC, with a reduction in the proportion of those with a lower second class degree seen over time (particularly for overseas students), and an increase in the proportion of those enrolling with a first class degree. Both of these trends are seen in the table below. These trends could be suggestive of trends seen in awarding of degrees, student selection by AETOs, or a belief amongst prospective students that having higher degree classifications is necessary to enter into a career at the Bar – it is difficult to infer exactly what the causes of these trends may be. It is worth noting that the proportion of students with a lower second class degree increased for those enrolling in 2022/23 and 2023/4 compared to 2021/22.

Domicile and degree class of Bar training students over time

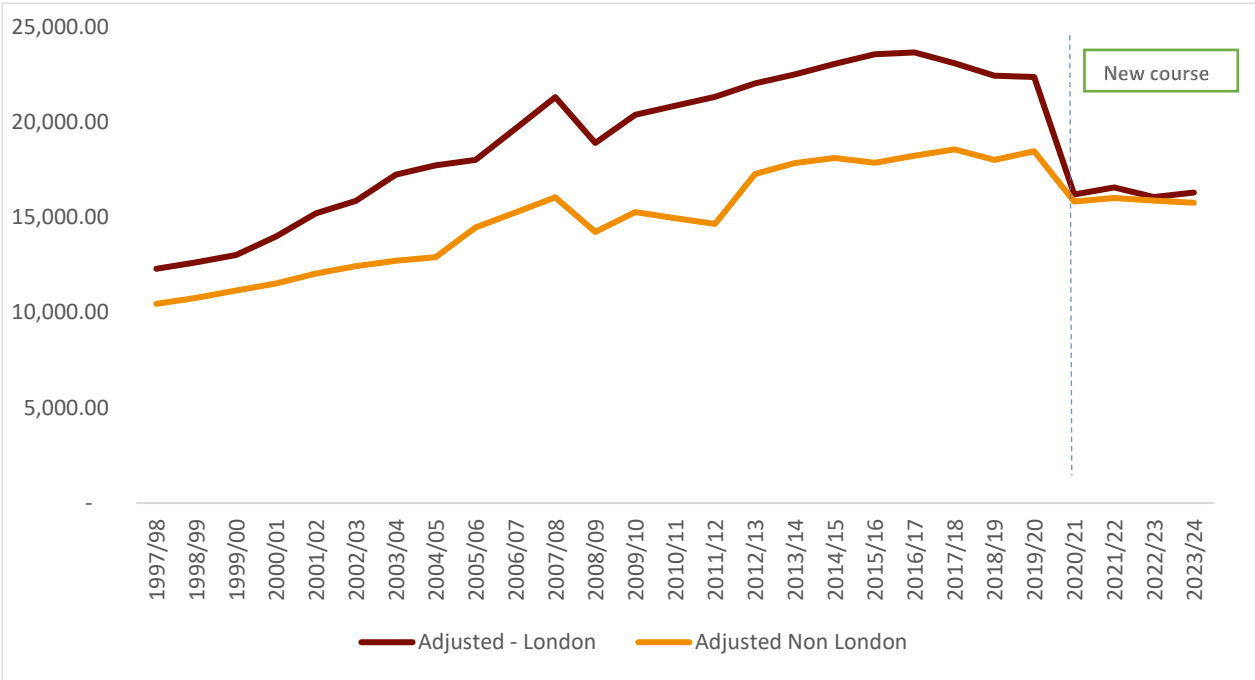
Domicile	Course and enrolment year	A: First class	B: Upper second class	C: Lower second class	D: Other	E: Third
Overseas	BPTC_2011/2012	2.4%	42.0%	47.0%	8.7%	0.0%
	BPTC_2019/2020	12.1%	59.5%	26.4%	2.0%	0.0%
	New course_2020/2021	11.1%	48.8%	40.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	New course_2021/2022	13.4%	54.7%	31.9%	0.0%	0.0%
	New course_2022/2023	13.9%	49.9%	36.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	New course_2023/2024	14.9%	51.1%	34.0%	0.0%	0.0%
UK	BPTC_2011/2012	20.8%	59.9%	16.0%	3.2%	0.0%
	BPTC_2019/2020	31.7%	57.7%	7.1%	3.5%	0.0%
	New course_2020/2021	35.6%	52.3%	12.1%	0.0%	0.0%
	New course_2021/2022	38.1%	54.2%	7.8%	0.0%	0.0%
	New course_2022/2023	35.8%	52.4%	11.7%	0.0%	0.0%
	New course_2023/2024	37.2%	51.1%	11.7%	0.0%	0.0%

ANNEX 3 - FEES

1. The chart below shows the average fees charged at London vs non-London providers from 1990/91 onwards. It is clear to see that the course from 2020/21 onwards is less expensive than the BPTC was, after adjusting for inflation to 2023/24 prices. The chart below shows the inflation adjusted cost of vocational Bar training courses over time by location of provider. Figures are adjusted to 2022/23 prices using a UK Government published GDP deflator.

Chart 1. Inflation adjusted cost of vocational Bar training courses over time

Simple inflation adjusted average of Bar training fees for course providers.
 Adjusted to 23/24 prices using UK government GDP deflator (£gdp)



*Data for the academic years 05/06, 06/07 and 10/11 has been recalculated due to missing data.

- On average, the drop in the cost of Bar training tuition fees was almost £4,000 in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 after adjusting for inflation (and around £2,500 in tuition fees when not adjusting for inflation). This is a simple average of course providers' fees, and not what the average student would pay, as some providers have more students than others.
- When weighting the average tuition fee with regard to the number of students at each provider in the relevant year, the average student in 2019/20 would have paid around £19,700 in tuition fees when adjusting for inflation (to 2022/23 prices), compared to an average of around £15,600 in 2022/23, and around £15,700 in 2023/24. When not adjusting for inflation, the figures for 2019/20, 2023/23, and 2023/24 are £16,500, £14,700, and £15,700 respectively.