

Note: the timings quoted are indicative only and the meeting may extend beyond the anticipated finish.



Meeting of the Bar Standards Board

Thursday 30 January 2025, 2.00 pm (Hybrid meeting - in person and online)

Rooms 1.4 – 1.7, First Floor, BSB Offices / MS Teams

Agenda – Part 1 – Public

This meeting will be recorded for the purposes of minute taking as previously agreed by the Board. Your consent to this is assumed if you decide to attend. The recording will be deleted once the minutes are formally approved at the next meeting

Note: this meeting will be preceded by a Board Member seminar on “Enhanced consumer focus in public interest” from 11.30 pm-1.00 pm

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|-----|---|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. | Welcome / announcements (2.00 pm) | Chair | |
| 2. | Apologies | Chair | |
| 3. | Members’ interests and hospitality | Chair | |
| 4. | Approval of minutes from the last meeting (28 November 2024) | Annex A Chair | 3-8 |
| 5. | a) Matters arising & Action List | Annex B Chair | 9-10 |
| | b) Forward agenda | Annex C Chair | 11-12 |
| 6. | Annual Diversity Data Report (2.10 pm) | BSB 001 (25) Ewen Macleod | 13-20 |
| 7. | Annual report – Bar Training (2.20 pm) | BSB 002 (25) Rupika Madhura | 21-114 |
| 8. | Director General’s Report – Public Session (2.40 pm) | BSB 003 (25) Mark Neale | 115 |
| 9. | Chair’s Report on Visits & External Meetings | BSB 004 (25) Chair | 117 |
| 10. | Any other business | | |
| 11. | Date of next meeting Thursday 27 March 2025, 5 pm | | |
| 12. | Private Session (2.45 pm) | | |

John Picken
Governance Officer
23 January 2025

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| <p>BAR STANDARDS BOARD</p> |
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REGULATING BARRISTERS

Part 1 - Public**Minutes of the Bar Standards Board meeting****Thursday 28 November 2024 (5.00 pm)****Hybrid Meeting, Rooms 1.4-1.7, BSB Offices & MS Teams**

- Present:** Kathryn Stone OBE (Chair)
Gisela Abbam
Alison Allden OBE
Emir Feisal JP
Steve Haines
Simon Lewis – via Teams
Andrew Mitchell KC
Irena Sabic KC
Leslie Thomas KC
Stephen Thornton CBE
- By invitation:** Lorinda Long (Treasurer, Bar Council)
Andy Russell (Director, Council of the Inns of Court) – via Teams
- Press:** Neil Rose (Legal Futures)
- BSB Executive** Laura Cassidy (Stakeholder Engagement Officer)
Chris Fitzsimons (Communications Manager)
Rebecca Forbes (Head of Governance & Corporate Services)
Teresa Haskins (Director of People)
Saima Hirji (Acting Director of Regulatory Operations) – via Teams
Oliver Jackling (Research and Evaluation Manager)
Sara Jagger (Director of Legal & Enforcement)
Ewen Macleod (Director of Strategy & Policy)
Rupika Madhura (Interim Director of Standards)
Claudia Nawroth (Interim Reform Programme Manager) – via Teams
Mark Neale (Director General)
John Picken (Governance Officer)
Adelita Thursby-Pelham (Senior Regulatory Lawyer)
Wilf White (Director of Communications & Public Engagement)

Item 1 – Welcome / Announcements**Action**

1. Kathryn Stone welcomed those present, in particular Adelita Thursby-Pelham, the newly appointed Senior Regulatory Lawyer. She also noted with regret that this would be the last Board meeting for three Members who were standing down at the end of the year, namely:
 - Alison Allden OBE;
 - Steve Haines;
 - Simon Lewis.
2. Two Bar Council representatives are also retiring from their roles and three senior staff members are leaving the BSB either at the end of this year or in the early part of 2025 ie

- Lorinda Long (Bar Council Treasurer);
- Sam Townend KC (Bar Council Chair);
- Chris Fitzsimons (Communications Manager);
- Sara Jagger (Director of Legal and Enforcement);
- Wilf White (Director of Communications and Public Engagement).

3. She warmly thanked all those concerned for their hard work and valuable service during their time at the BSB. Members concurred and applauded their contributions.

4. **Item 2 – Apologies**

- Jeff Chapman KC

Item 3 – Members’ interests and hospitality

5. None.

Item 4 – Approval of Part 1 (public) minutes (Annex A)

6. The Board **approved** the Part 1 (public) minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024.

Item 5a – Matters arising & Action List

7. The Board **noted** the action list. The Chair also advised that in future, the “date of action required” column will be retitled “completion due date”.

JP to note

Item 5b – Forward agenda

8. The Board **noted** the forward agenda list.

Item 6 – Performance Report: Quarter 2 2024/25

BSB 058 (24)

Note: the Board received a revised version of Annex 1 to the performance report. It was edited down from the original version to aid readability.

9. Mark Neale commented as follows:

- this is the second issue of the balanced scorecard on performance and this new format has been well received by the Performance and Strategic Planning (PSP) Committee;
- the headline findings show a generally positive picture including:
 - the quality of decision making (independently assessed) by BSB reviewers remains high;
 - caseloads have stabilised;
 - in general, the timeliness of case management has improved (*note: the slippage in terms of Investigations reflects a higher proportion of cases completed that were already outside target parameters*).
- we expect that output for Quarter 3 will be impacted by the demands of the Reform Programme so results may fall back next time prior to recovery thereafter.

10. In response to questions from the Board, the executive commented that:

- we are still receiving more applications from overseas lawyers than we have capacity to manage. A separate paper in the private session proposes further action on this issue;
- we will separate out this particular group from future performance statistics so that the Board receives better insight on this matter;

- the negative change in respect of “investigations decided” reflects the earlier point about closure of cases that have overrun (cf. min 9). A higher proportion of those closed outside target means a lower proportion was completed within it, which then affects the figures. Our results for Quarter 3 will likewise be affected;
 - there are good reasons why cases overrun – often due to reasonable requests for more time on the part of the barristers concerned;
 - we already tried to reflect the increased likelihood of adjournment when we last revised our performance standard, but when the reasons are medically related, delays can be successive and open ended.
11. With reference to the latter point, Andy Russell agreed that health related reasons, particularly mental health, are an increasing factor in delays to Tribunals. If there is medical evidence that sufficiently justifies the adjournment there is little else that can be done until that situation changes.
12. Steve Haines asked about the scope for stopping the clock on performance for cases that are adjourned. Sara Jagger confirmed that this does occur for cases that are at Tribunal stage but not always for those still under investigation.
13. **AGREED**
to note the report.

**Item 7 – Feedback from IPSOS Mori poll on the BSB
BSB 059 (24)**

14. Wilf White commented as follows:
- the poll was commissioned in response to a challenge from Emir Feisal as to the evidence base for our understanding of public awareness;
 - in overall terms, the findings are encouraging (85% know that barristers are regulated though a high proportion (over 70% in each case) have either never had any personal experience of dealing with a barrister or knows of anyone who works as a barrister;
 - there is less awareness about the BSB itself (half of those surveyed had not heard of it) which suggests more promotional work is required.
15. Members welcomed the report and questioned:
- whether it will become an annual report,
 - future action to raise public awareness ie will this be driven by the Communications Team or as part of a wider strategic plan;
 - the scope of future awareness surveys – could it cover all legal services; will it include more qualitative data, and could it give more focus to clients who did have previous knowledge of working with barristers;
 - how initial contact was generated (ie personal or work related) for those who did state they had previous knowledge of barristers.
16. In response the executive stated that:
- the BSB has an organisation-wide responsibility for communications, so we do need to consider this at a strategic level. That said, those colleagues with specific roles in communication will clearly have a lead in delivering improved public awareness;

- it will be for the new Director of Programmes, Planning & Engagement to determine whether the poll will be repeated as an annual event;
 - the report included with the agenda paper highlights the key findings but there is scope to drill down more in terms of further analysis;
 - the IPSOS Mori survey did not detail the contact source for barristers other than to ask whether or not it was from a direct access route;
 - we already have a new survey planned on client experience of barristers. This will also include a higher proportion of qualitative data, so feedback will be properly nuanced. That should be completed by the end of the current financial year and will be followed-up every two years thereafter.
17. Stephen Thornton said that a key question relates to empowerment ie whether people know that they can seek redress and have access to relevant signposting eg via the Citizens' Advice Bureau site. These issues might be built into the structure of future surveys. With that in mind, Steve Haines suggested focusing on the solicitor-barrister relationship from a client perspective (eg ask questions on level of transparency and value to money).
18. Andrew Mitchell KC confirmed that policies are already in place within chambers which enable clients to make service / conduct complaints about barristers. Oliver Jackling confirmed that a further, separate piece of research work on the solicitor - barrister relationship will commence shortly. This has been jointly funded by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA).
19. Members also commented with concern about the public perception of barristers ie more said they have confidence in service standards than they do in terms of treating clients fairly and without discrimination. The results for minoritised groups for the same criteria follow the same pattern but are lower overall compared with non-minoritised groups.
20. In response, Oliver Jackling highlighted the correlation that exists between confidence levels and prior experience of working with barristers. Those in this latter category had a much higher degree of confidence than those without such experience.
21. Andrew Mitchell KC added that further analysis on causation is needed to explain why the disparity for minoritised groups exists – in particular whether it is the result of anything specific that the regulator and / or the profession does (or does not do) or whether wider societal issues are at play.
22. **AGREED**
to note the report and the comments raised by Members.
- Item 8 – Performance and Strategic Planning (PSP) Committee Mid Year Report (1 May 2024 - 31 October 2024)**
BSB 060 (24)
23. Steve Haines highlighted the key points of the Committee's work over the past six months ie
- oversight of the 2025/26 budget where the Committee recognised the significant rise in expenditure but also considered it a necessary future investment against which it will hold the executive to account;

OJ to
note

- the usefulness of the balanced scorecard in explaining the outcomes of recent performance reports;
- the Reform Programme which is currently running to time.

24. Kathryn Stone welcomed the report and reiterated her sincere thanks to Steve Haines for his stewardship of the PSP Committee.

25. **AGREED**
to note the report.

Item 9 – Governance Risk & Audit (GRA) Committee – Annual Report 2024

BSB 061 (24)

26. Stephen Thornton referred to the GRA Annual Report and distinguished between the Committee's cyclical work ie oversight of internal audit and corporate / regulatory risk reports and other, more specific items eg revision to the regulatory risk framework; the work of the Independent Reviewers and the BSB's compliance with anti-money laundering regulations.

27. **AGREED**
to note the report.

Item 10 – Director General's Report – Public Session

BSB 062 (24)

28. Mark Neale introduced the report and additionally commented on the outcome of the [BSB's 2024 spot check](#) on barrister compliance with continuing professional development (CPD) requirements. This:

- shows good overall levels of compliance;
- highlights examples of good practice;
- notes areas of weakness, often in respect of inadequate reflection on completed CPD activities.

29. **AGREED**
to note the report.

Item 11 – Chair's Report on Visits and External Meetings

BSB 063 (24)

30. The Chair referred to the section on Board recruitment in her paper and thanked Paula McDonald, Gisela Abbam and Simon Lewis for their help and support in convening over three days for the Board recruitment interviews.

31. **AGREED**
to note the report.

32. Schedule of Board Meetings Jan 2025 – March 2026

BSB 064 (25)

The Board **approved** the schedule of meetings for January 2025 – March 2026 as set out in the report.

Item 13 – Any Other Business

33. None.

Item 14 – Date of next meeting

34. • Thursday 30 January 2025, 2.00 pm.

Item 15 – Private Session

35. The Board resolved to consider the following items in private session:
- (1) Approval of Part 2 (private) minutes – 26 September 2024 & 9 October 2024.
 - (2) Matters arising and action points – Part 2.
 - (3) BSB Corporate Risk update
 - (4) Review of regulatory fees
 - (5) Reform Programme: progress, timetables and reporting
 - (6) Update on proposal for dealing with Transferring Qualified Lawyer (TQL) applications
 - (7) Appointment of Board Members
 - (8) Director General's Report – Private Session.
 - (9) Any other private business.
36. The meeting finished at 5.50 pm.

BSB – List of Part 1 Actions

30 January 2025

(This includes a summary of all actions from the previous meetings)

| Min ref | Action required | Person(s) responsible | Completion Due Date | Progress report | |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| | | | | Date | Summary of update |
| 26b (26/09/24) | continue to collate feedback from stakeholders about the policy on chambers and establish a plan for future engagement opportunities | Mark Neale | by end March 2025 | 21/01/25 | In hand- the Chambers pages on our website will be published shortly. We shall then consider an engagement strategy for 2025 which reflects our continuing work on the <i>Equality Rules</i> and our consultation on future strategy. |
| 16c (23/05/24) | reconsider the points made about applications from transferring qualified lawyers who are not seeking to practise at the Bar in England and Wales (cf. mins 11 & 13 – 23/05/24) and provide an update at the July Board meeting | Mark Neale | before 18 July 2024 before 19 September 2024 by end Nov 25 | 21/01/25 | Completed - the Board approved a strategy at its meeting on 28 November |
| 16d (23/05/24) | include headline results on the market study on intermediaries for the Board Away Day (27 June 2024) | Ewen Macleod | 27 June 2024 January 2025 | 21/01/24 16/07/24 | Completed – this work is now complete. There is no decision for the Board to make at this point, so we will circulate an update by email. Ongoing – the SLT commissioned some additional research on this, which is currently being undertaken before coming back to the Board |
| 16c (30/11/23) | investigate the reasons for the rise in applications from overseas lawyers seeking to transfer to the Bar for England and Wales and to involve the Bar Council as necessary | Mark Neale | end March 2024 end July 2024 | 29/09/24 | Completed – the Board received a report and approved a strategy at its meeting on 30 November |

BSB – List of Part 1 Actions

30 January 2025

(This includes a summary of all actions from the previous meetings)

| Min ref | Action required | Person(s) responsible | Completion Due Date | Progress report | |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|---|
| | | | | Date | Summary of update |
| 16d (30/11/23) | consider expediting full cost recovery analysis of authorisation applications | Rebecca Forbes / Mark Neale | 25 January 2024 end Sept 2024 end March 2025 | 21/01/25 | Action in hand – the Board approved fees for Transferring Qualified Lawyer applications at its meeting on 30 November. Recommendations about fees for other applications will come to the Board in March |

Forward Agenda

Thursday 27 March 2025 – 5 pm start

- Director General’s Report (public & private session)
- BSB Business Plan 2025/26 and final budget
- Q3 performance report
- Governance documents
- Reform and re-organisation
- Risk Framework Review: Fundamentals
- Corporate Risk Report
- BSB Updated First-tier Complaints Rules: Consultation
- BSB Empowering Consumers Consultation
- Updated Ethics “Call for evidence”
- Regulatory fees

Thursday 22 May 2025 – 2 pm start

- Director General’s Report (public & private session)
- Enforcement Regulations – proposals for change (consultation)
- Reform and re-organisation
- Authorisations review phase 1
- PSP Committee Annual Report
- Corporate Risk Report

Thursday 26 June 2025 (9.30 am start)

- BSB Strategy – final version

Thursday 24 July 2025 – 5 pm start

- Director General’s Report (public & private session)
- Q4 performance report
- Reform and re-organisation
- Annual “deep dive” on the corporate risk register
- Board member reappointment and recruitment

Thursday 25 September 2025 – 2 pm start

- Director General’s Report (public & private session)
- Q1 performance report
- Reform and re-organisation
- Corporate Risk Report

Thursday 27 November 2025 – 5 pm start

- Director General’s Report (public & private session)
- Dates for Board Meetings (Jan 2026 – Mar 2027)
- Annual report – Bar Training
- PSP Committee Mid Year Report
- GRA Committee Annual Report
- Q2 performance report
- Enforcement Regulations – outcome of consultation
- Reform and re-organisation
- Corporate Risk Report
- Board member appointment

Thursday 29 January 2026 – 2 pm start

- Director General's Report (public & private session)
- Reform and re-organisation

Thursday 26 March 2026 – 5 pm start

- Director General's Report (public & private session)
- Q3 performance report
- Reform and re-organisation
- Corporate Risk Report

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Meeting: | Bar Standards Board | Date: | 30 January 2025 |
| Title: | Annual report on diversity at the Bar | | |
| Author: | Ewen Macleod | | |
| Post: | Director of Strategy and Policy | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Paper for: | Decision: <input type="checkbox"/> | Discussion: <input type="checkbox"/> | Noting: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> (enter text) |
|-------------------|---|---|--|---|

| | |
|--|---|
| Paper relates to the Regulatory Objective (s) highlighted in bold below | |
| (a) | protecting and promoting the public interest |
| (b) | supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law |
| (c) | improving access to justice |
| (d) | protecting and promoting the interests of consumers |
| (e) | promoting competition in the provision of services |
| (f) | encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession |
| (g) | increasing public understanding of citizens' legal rights and duties |
| (h) | promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paper does not principally relate to Regulatory Objectives |

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the diversity of the Bar.

Executive summary

2. This paper provides a summary of the annual Diversity at the Bar report. The Executive Summary of this year's publication is attached at Annex A. The full report is available in the Board reading area.

Recommendations

3. The Board is invited to note the report summary.

Discussion

4. Overall, this year has seen the continuation of several longer-term trends, including an increase in the proportion of practising barristers who are female; who are from a minority ethnic background; who have primary care of a child; and who are aged 55 or more.
5. This year has seen an increase in individuals currently undertaking pupillage. The number in the practising or non-practising stage of pupillage as of December 2023 was 589, which is 17 higher than that seen in December 2023, although smaller than the increase between 2022 and 2023, where the number of pupils increased by 84. The number of pupils is the highest number seen for any Diversity at the Bar report (the report started in 2015).

6. Increases in disclosure rates between 2023 and 2024 range between 0.4-1.7 percentage points (pp) for the majority of the characteristics reported on (all except for gender, ethnicity and age, which already have a high response rate). Increases in response rate in the last couple of years have slowed down quite considerably for monitoring questions on gender identity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic and caring responsibility. We continue to encourage barristers to update their diversity data during Authorisation to Practice. We will continue to discuss how we might do this more effectively with our diversity taskforces.

Equality and Diversity

7. The data in the report are vital to inform our work to promote diversity and inclusion in the profession and to assess the impact of our policies by providing evidence for our equality impact assessment of all plans and policies.

Risk implications

8. That the Profession fails to reflect the diversity of society is one of the core risks identified in our Risk Index. This is fundamental to addressing our regulatory objective to encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession. The report contributes valuable evidence in meeting these duties and demonstrates that further work continues to be needed to address this risk.

Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

9. The Report will be published on our website and publicised in the usual way. One key message in our communications will be the ongoing work on the new Equality Rules, where we will set out our longer-term objectives to promote diversity and inclusion. Whilst progress has been made in making the profession more diverse, more is needed to create a more equal and inclusive working culture.

Annex

10. Annex A – Executive Summary
11. The full report is included as Board reading material.

Annual report on diversity at the Bar 2025

Executive Summary

1. This report presents a summary of the latest available diversity data for the Bar (covering pupils, practising King’s Counsel - KC - and practising non-KC barristers). The report assists the Bar Standards Board (BSB) in meeting its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and sets out an evidence base from which relevant and targeted policy can be developed.
2. Overall, this year has seen the continuation of several longer term trends, including an increase in the proportion of practising barristers who are female; who are from a minority ethnic background; who have primary care of a child; and who are aged 55 or more.
3. **The practising Bar**
 - a) The overall number of practitioners (including all pupils) at the Bar as of 1 December 2023 stood at 18,756: Of this number 589 were pupils, 2,089 were KCs, and 16,052 were non-KC barristers.
 - b) This year has seen an increase in individuals currently undertaking pupillage. The number in the practising or non-practising stage of pupillage as of December 2023 was 589, which is 17 higher than that seen in December 2022, and the highest number seen for any Diversity at the Bar report (the report started in 2015).
 - c) The number of non-KC and KC barristers has increased year on year (an increase of 313 non-KCs and 44 KCs.) The increase in the number of non-KCs at the Bar is larger than that seen in previous years since 2015, whereas the increase seen for KCs is a little lower than the average over this period.
4. **Response Rates**
 - a) The response rate increased across all collected data in 2023 with the exception of gender and ethnicity. While there have been small drops in the response rate for gender in past Diversity at the Bar reports, this is the first year in which the response rate for ethnicity has fallen since these reports started in 2015.
 - b) In 2024 the year on year increases in disclosure rates range between 0.4-1.7 percentage points (pp) for the majority of the characteristics reported on (all except for gender, ethnicity and age, which already have a high response rate). Increases in response rate in the last couple of years have slowed down quite considerably for monitoring questions on gender identity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic and caring responsibility.

| Monitoring Category | 2024 response rate (%) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Gender ¹ | 97.9 |
| Gender Identity ² | 52.9 |
| Sex ³ | 40.8 |
| Ethnicity | 95.0 |
| Disability | 66.4 |
| Age | 90.2 |
| Religion or Belief | 62.1 |
| Sexual orientation | 63.5 |
| Type of school attended from 11-18 | 62.5 |
| First generation to attend university | 58.6 |
| Free school meals | 37.4 |
| Caring responsibilities for children | 62.4 |
| Caring responsibilities for others | 60.6 |

5. Gender

- a) When excluding non-responses,⁴ the overall percentage of women at the Bar increased by 0.6pp from December 2023 to December 2024 to 41.2 per cent. This compares to an estimate of 50.8 per cent of the UK working age (16-64) population being female as of September 2024.⁵ 58.6 per cent of the Bar were male, and 0.2 per cent were non-binary or used a different term for their gender.

¹ The monitoring question for this is: What best describes your gender?

² The monitoring question for this is: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

³ The monitoring question for this is: What is your sex?

⁴ In previous Diversity at the Bar Reports, the first figure reported for gender was including non-responses. As the proportion on non-responses has increased, providing this comparison year on year would give a poor representation of overall trends.

⁵ Calculated from the 'Labour Force Survey: Population aged 16-64: Female: Thousands: SA', and 'Labour Force Survey: Population aged 16-64: UK: Male: Thousands: SA' datasets published by the Office for National Statistics on ons.gov.uk

- b) Excluding non-responses, the proportion of KCs who are female increased from 20.3 per cent in 2023 to 21.1 per cent in 2024, a 0.8pp increase. This represents an increase of 8.1 percentage points in the ten years since 2015. However, there remains a large disparity between the proportion of the Bar who are female and the proportion of KCs who are female (41.2 per cent compared to 21.1 per cent).
- c) The proportion of women at the Bar has increased by 5.3 percentage points overall in the ten years since the 2015 Diversity at the Bar Report (when excluding non-responses). The increase has been 5.1pp for female non-KC barristers, and 8.1pp for female KC barristers.
- d) The proportion of female pupils (excluding those who have not provided information on gender) was lower compared to December 2023 and stood at 58.3 per cent, a decrease of 1.1 percentage points. Although 2022 saw the highest proportion of female pupils (at 59.9%) in the last ten years, 2023 and 2024 had higher proportions of pupils who were female than any other previous Diversity at the Bar Report. The proportion of pupils in 2024 represents an increase of 8.2 percentage points compared to 10 years ago.

6. Ethnicity

- a) When excluding those that have not provided information, around 17.3 per cent of the Bar is from a minority ethnic background. This compares to around 19.1 per cent of the 16-64 working age population in England and Wales as of Q3 2024.
- b) The proportion of the Bar from a minority ethnic background (excluding non-responses) has increased by 0.4pp compared to December 2023, and by 4.3pp in the last ten years. Since 2023, the percentage of non-KC barristers from a minority ethnic background has increased from 17.5% to 17.9%, and the percentage of KCs from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from 10.7 per cent to 10.8 per cent. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background showed a decrease from 24.9% to 24.5% compared to December 2023 but remains higher than that seen for most other Diversity at the Bar reports (with the exception of 2020 and 2023).
- c) There is still a disparity between the overall percentage of barristers from minority ethnic backgrounds across the profession (17.3%), and the percentage of KCs (10.8%) from minority ethnic backgrounds, although the disparity is reducing over time. This may reflect some previous trends (e.g. a lower percentage of such barristers entered the profession in the past.) It may also suggest barriers to progression to KC status for practitioners from minority ethnic backgrounds.

- d) There are some notable differences when further disaggregating by ethnic group. When excluding those that have not provided information, there was a year-on-year increase in the overall proportion of Asian/Asian British barristers and Mixed/Multiple ethnic group barristers (an increase of 0.2pp for both groups). The proportion of Black/Black British barristers remains the same as in December 2023, whereas the proportion of White barristers has decreased by 0.4pp over the same period.
- e) There is a greater proportion of Asian/Asian British practitioners at the Bar compared to the proportion of Asian/Asian British individuals in the UK working age population (8.4% compared to 8.0%), and the same can be said for those from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds (3.9% compared to 1.9%). By contrast, there is a smaller proportion of those from Black/Black British backgrounds (3.6% compared to 5.4%), and for those from other ethnic groups (1.5% compared to 3.8%).
- f) There is also a greater disparity in the proportion of all non-KCs from Black/Black British backgrounds compared to the proportion of all KCs from the same background, with the disparity being particularly high for those of Black/Black British – African ethnic backgrounds. (discounting those that did not provide ethnicity data, 1.3 per cent of KCs are from a Black/Black British background, compared to 3.8 per cent of non-KCs).

7. Disability

- a) When excluding those that had not provided information, there has been an increase of 0.9 percentage points in the proportion of the Bar with a declared disability. The increase was largest for pupils - the proportion of pupils declaring a disability was 1.7pp higher than in December 2023; while the respective figures for non-KCs showed a year-on-year increase of 0.7pp, and an increase of 0.5pp seen for KCs.
- b) There still appears to be an underrepresentation of disabled practitioners at the Bar. Although there is a relatively low response rate of 66.4 per cent, among those who provided information on disability status, 8.9 per cent per cent of the Bar; 17.4 per cent of pupils; 8.9 per cent of non-KC barristers; and 5.1 per cent of KCs had declared a disability as of December 2024. Although the proportion of pupils with a declared disability is similar to the estimated 17.9 per cent of the employed working age UK population with a declared disability, the proportions for Non-KC barristers and KCs is significantly lower, although it has increased over time.

8. Age

- a) When excluding those who have not provided information, those aged between 25 and 54 make up around 72.1 per cent of the Bar. This is a decrease compared to December 2023 of around 1.5 percentage points (72.1% compared to 73.6%), with relatively more of the Bar in the 55-64 and 65+ age ranges compared to 2023.

- b) 26.7 per cent of those who have provided information on age are aged 55+. This continues a general trend of an increasing proportion of the Bar in the oldest age bands and compares to figures of 25.4 per cent in 2023 (a 1.3pp increase); and 14.8 per cent in the first Diversity at the Bar Report in 2015.

9. Religion and Belief

- a) Including those that have not provided information, the largest group at the Bar is Christians (25.5%) followed by those with no religion (23.4%), although for pupils this trend is reversed. When excluding those who have not provided information, the profile of the Bar in comparison to the wider population of England and Wales is quite similar for religion and belief for most religious groups.

10. Sexual Orientation

- a) Excluding those that have not provided information, 7.5 per cent of the Bar as a whole, 17 per cent of pupils, 7.4 per cent of non-KCs, and 5.6 per cent of KCs provided their sexual orientation as one of Bisexual; Gay or Lesbian; or used another term for their sexual orientation (not including heterosexual). This compares to an estimate of 4.0 per cent of the UK population aged 16 and over as of 2022.

11. Socio-economic background

- a) The data suggest that a disproportionately high percentage of barristers attended a UK independent school between the ages of 11-18. As of December 2024, 19.4 per cent of the Bar (including non-respondents) attended an independent school between 11-18, compared to approximately 6.5 per cent of school children in England, and 9.7 per cent of UK domiciled full-time first degree entrants in the UK. Of those providing information on school attended, around one in three attended an independent school in the UK.
- b) When excluding non-responses, as of December 2024 53.7 per cent of barristers had parent(s) who attended university; and 46.3 per cent did not have parent(s) who attended university.

12. Caring responsibilities

- a) When excluding non-responses, 31.5 per cent of the Bar; 7.5 per cent of pupils; 32.5 per cent of non-KCs; and 26.8 per cent of KCs have primary caring responsibilities for one or more children. Overall, the proportion of the Bar with primary caring responsibilities for one or more children has increased by around 9.5pp since 2015, 6.5pp since 2019 and 0.5pp since 2023.

- b) The increase in the proportion of barristers who provide primary care for a child is seen for both male and female barristers, although there is a large disparity in the proportions involved: overall, excluding non-responses, around 41 per cent of female barristers, and 23 per cent of male barristers provided primary care for a child.
- c) Figures produced by the UK Office of National Statistics suggest that as of September 2024, 37.0 per cent of employed males, and 40.5 per cent of employed females are a primary carer for one or more children: This suggests that while the proportion of female barristers with primary caring responsibilities for children matches the UK workforce as a whole, the equivalent proportion for male barristers is significantly lower.
- d) Of those that provided a Yes/No response, around 15.6 per cent of respondents provided care for another person (excluding dependent children) for 1 or more hours per week as of December 2024. This is in line with the proportion of those in work in the UK who are carers.

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|--------------|--------------------------|
| Meeting: | BSB Board meeting | Date: | Thursday 30 January 2025 |
| Title: | Annual Report to the Board on Bar Training | | |
| Author: | Colleagues in Regulatory Standards Directorate and Data and Insights Team. | | |
| Posts: | Various | | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Paper for: | Decision: <input type="checkbox"/> | Discussion: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Noting: <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: <input type="checkbox"/> (enter text) |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| Paper relates to the Regulatory Objective (s) highlighted in bold below | |
| (a) | protecting and promoting the public interest |
| (b) | supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law |
| (c) | improving access to justice |
| (d) | protecting and promoting the interests of consumers |
| (e) | promoting competition in the provision of services |
| (f) | encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession |
| (g) | increasing public understanding of citizens' legal rights and duties |
| (h) | promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles |
| (i) | promoting the prevention and detection of economic crime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paper does not principally relate to Regulatory Objectives |

Purpose of Report

- To provide the Board with strategic oversight of the operation and outcomes of Bar Training.

Background

- Two reports are attached for the Board.
 - The Annual Report (Annex 1) offers an overview of Bar training covering the period from **December 2023 to November 2024**.
 - Statistical Report on vocational training to become a barrister, and student progression on to the professional stage of training in England and Wales (Annex 2). This covers the period from **2011/12 to 2023/24**, a period which contains the transition from the Bar Professional Training Course ((BPTC) which ran from 2011/12-2019/20) to the Bar training courses offered from 2020/21 following the Future Bar Training reforms.
- These reports offer 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:
 - 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;
 - how the processes for authorising, assessing, monitoring and evaluating Bar Training are working now that training reforms have become 'business as usual';
 - how we have dealt with issues that have arisen during the year.

4. The report in Annex 1 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. Where relevant we indicate where further detail can be found should any Board members wish to explore a particular topic in more depth.

Key points to note

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 standards are at risk. 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 of Bar training providers admission arrangements published on 20 January¹ 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 successfully to 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.

¹ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/resources/press-releases/bar-standards-board-publishes-thematic-review-of-training-providers-admissions-arrangements.html>

Part 1 – Public

- 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 (around eight in ten) historically 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 Service 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.

Part 1 – Public

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 expect to return to this topic in 2025.

Future work

13. 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. This will be supported by the new Department of Regulatory Standards, as part of the next 5-year strategy.

Recommendations

14. The Board is invited to discuss the report and agree to its publication following the Board meeting.

Resource implications / Impacts on other teams / departments or projects

15. The production of the annual report to the Board is now scheduled into the work plans of all teams concerned.

Equality and Diversity

16. Any significant changes or developments to Bar training are subject to Equality Impact Assessments.

Risk implications

17. Risk is embedded in everything we do and is reflected in this report where relevant.

Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

18. We strive to have an open and constructive dialogue with our key stakeholders. We have commenced discussions with the Communications and Public Engagement team on the development of a stakeholder engagement strategy with all relevant stakeholders.

END



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:
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- 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).
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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.

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

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.

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.

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

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 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.

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

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.
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.

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>

- 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 |

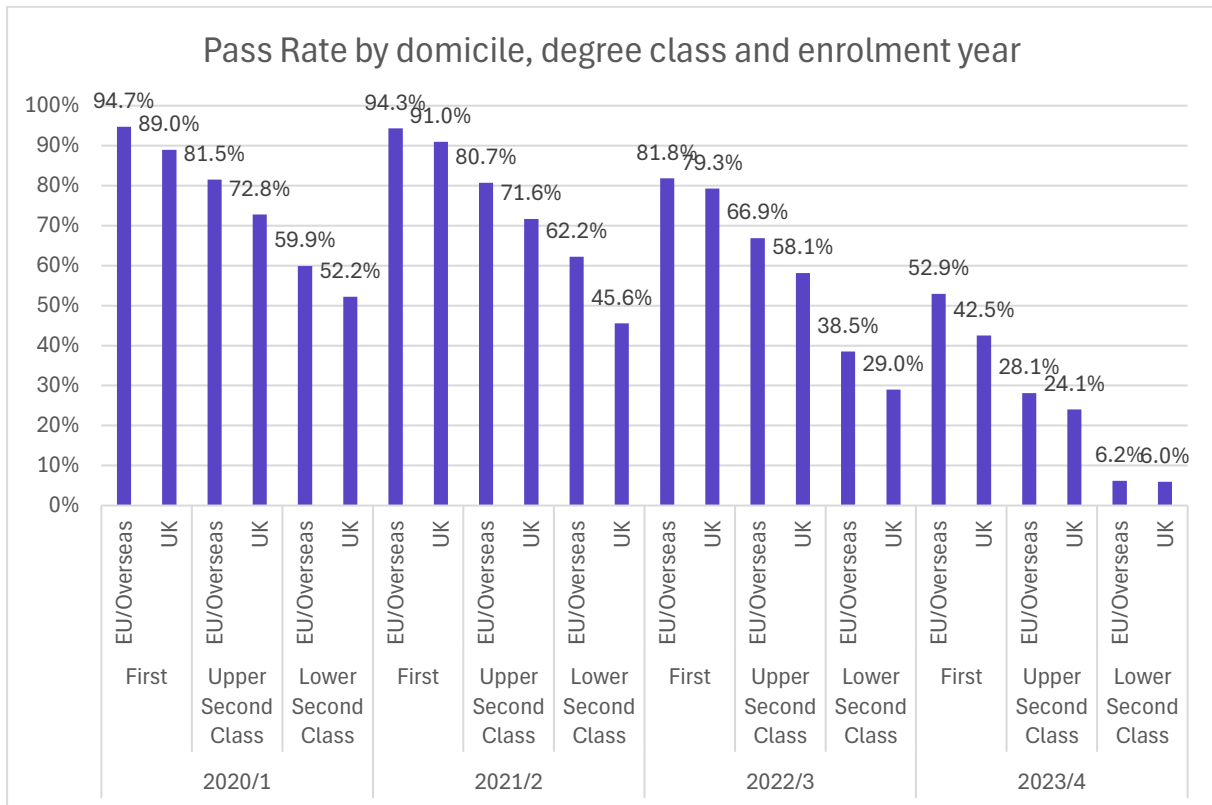
52. The first Bar training cohort, which enrolled in September 2020 and sat their first centralised assessments in December 2020 or April 2021, will reach the end of the five-year time limit for completion in September 2025. This will mean that near the time of the next of these reports we will have 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

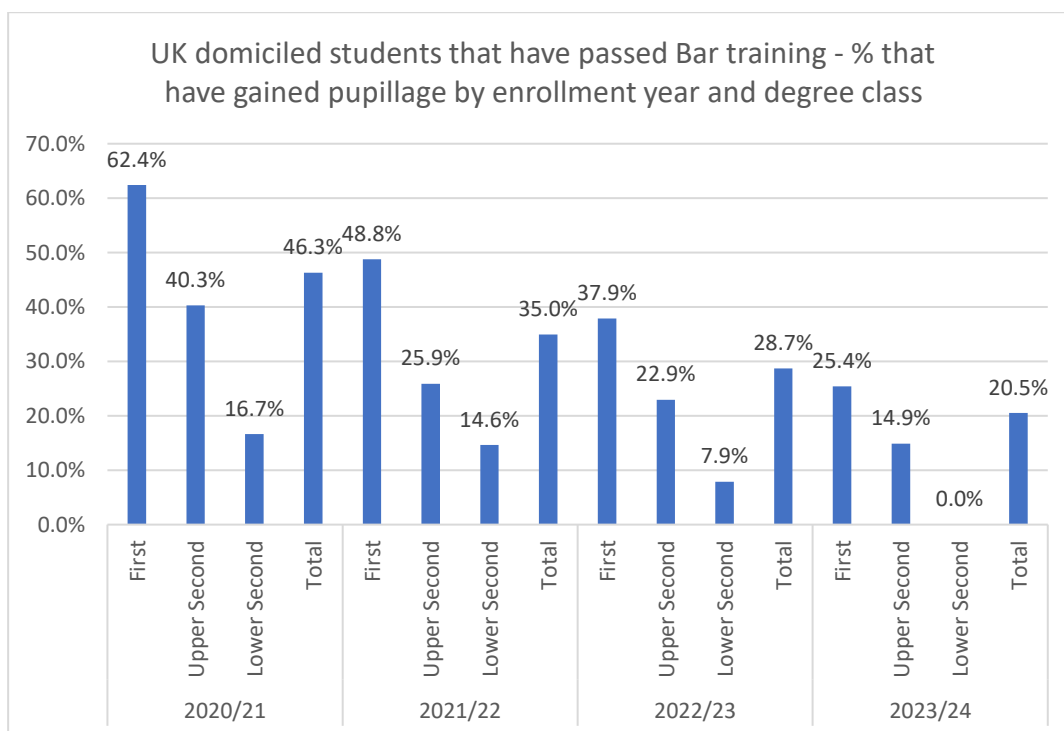
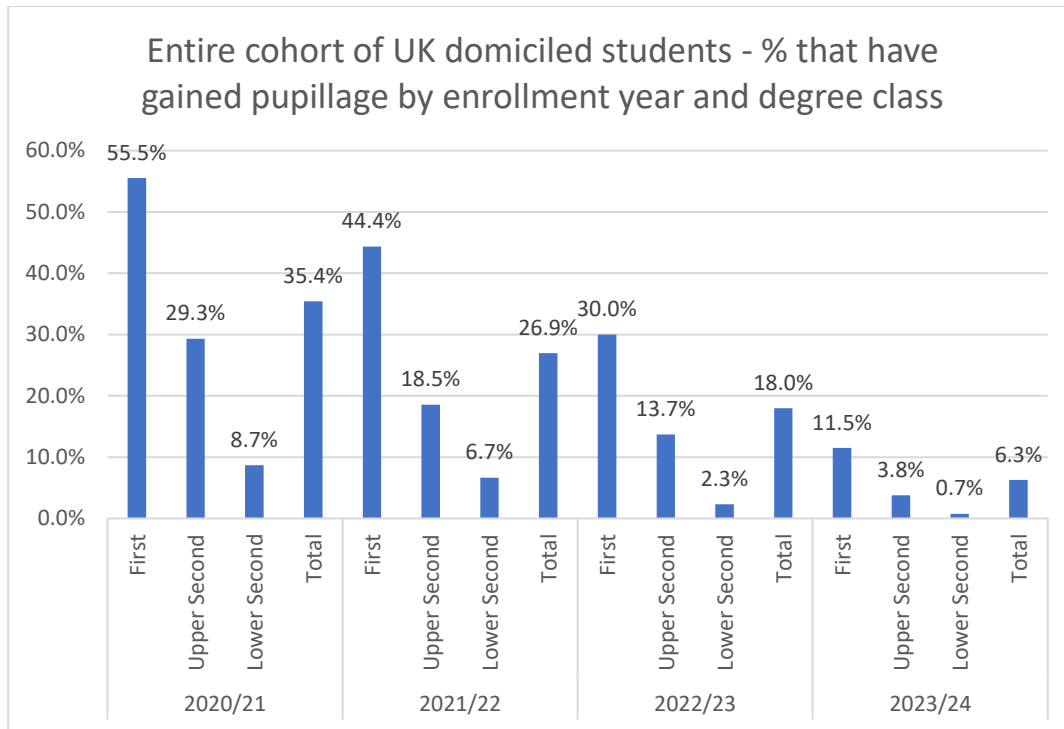
53. The BSB has a statutory duty to encourage an independent, strong, diverse, and effective legal profession and accessibility was one of the four key principles of training reform. Previous BSB research has identified that ethnicity and socio-economic status have a significant impact on students' performance 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 ⁵on 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. 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.

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

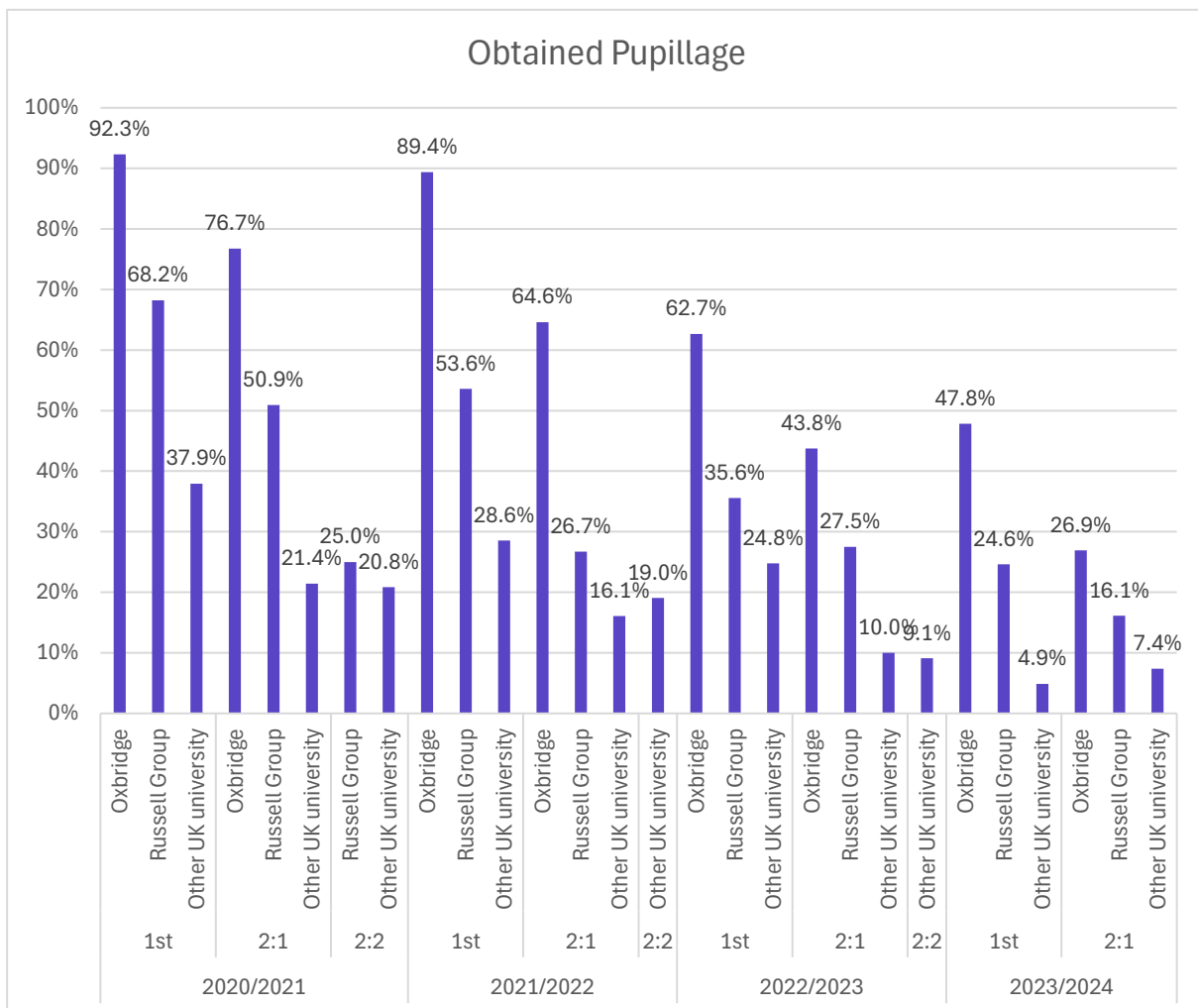


57. As of 8 October 2024, overall pass rates by cohort stand at 76% for 2020/21 enrolled students, 77% for 2021/22 enrolled students, 62% for 2022/23 enrolled students, and 29% for 2023/24 enrolled students. Note that pass rates are lower for more recent cohorts as students will have had less time to 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

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

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.

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.

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

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;
 - 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

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

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)
 - 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).

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

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 | |

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

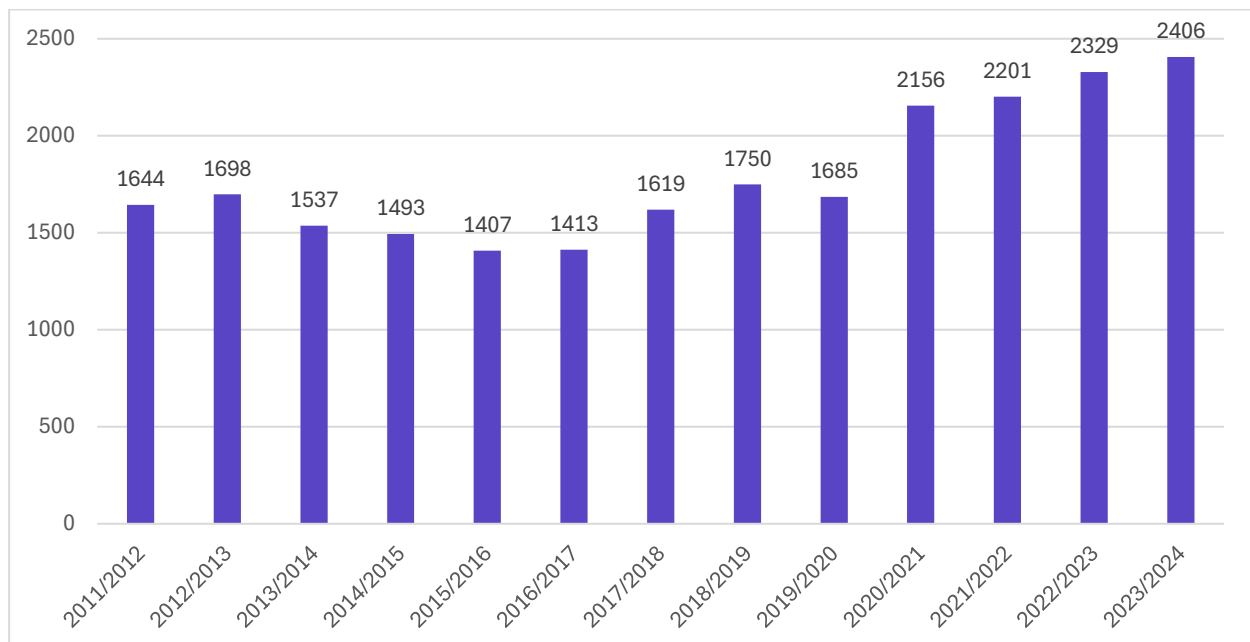
¹² CLS offers a specialist add on to the Bar training course as well.

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

Overall

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

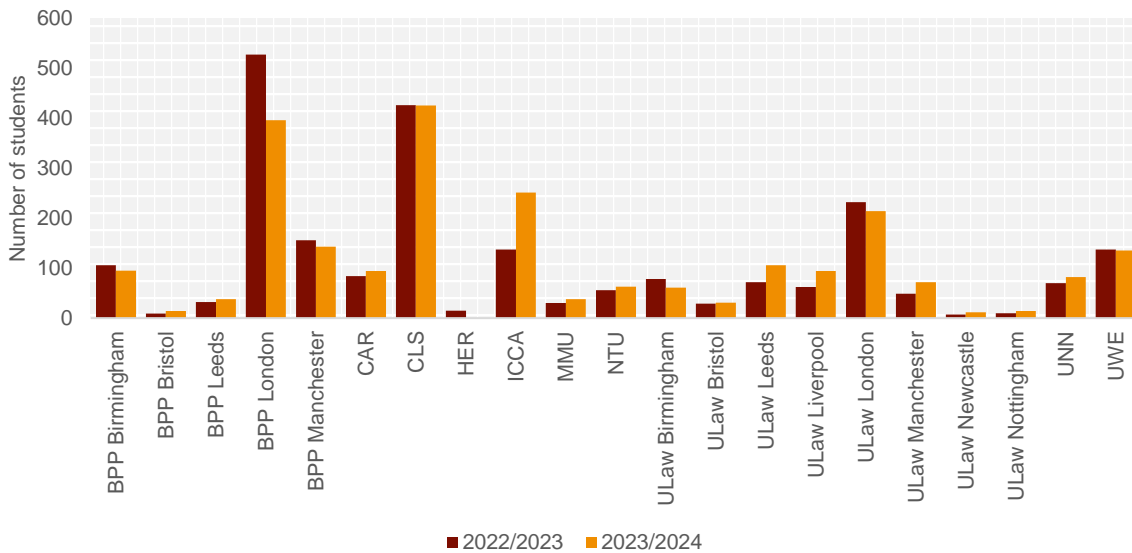
Chart 2. Enrolments by year overall



4. 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.

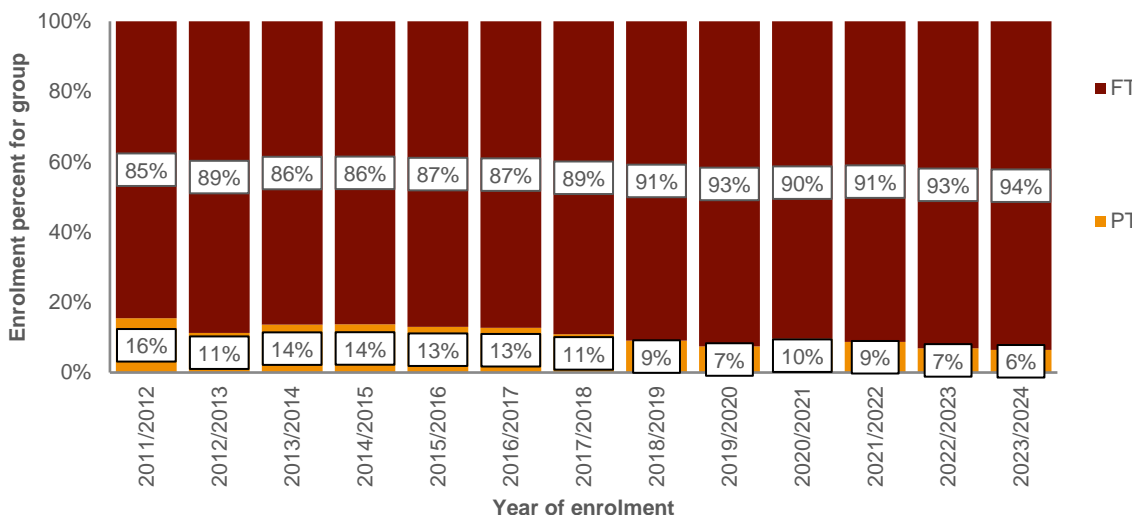
Chart 3. Enrolments by training provider for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024



Study mode and pathway

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

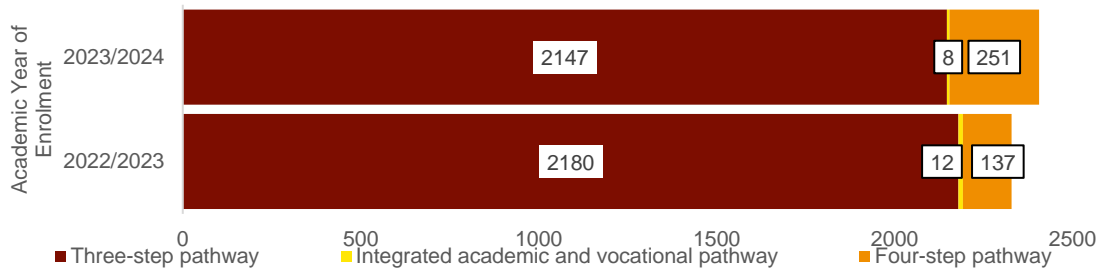
Chart 4. Enrolment on Bar training over time by study mode (% of cohort)



- 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.

8. 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)



9. 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

1. **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.
2. **Disability** - Overall, the proportion of those with a declared disability has remained relatively stable over time, fluctuating at around 10-11% of students.
3. **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).
4. **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).
5. 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% |

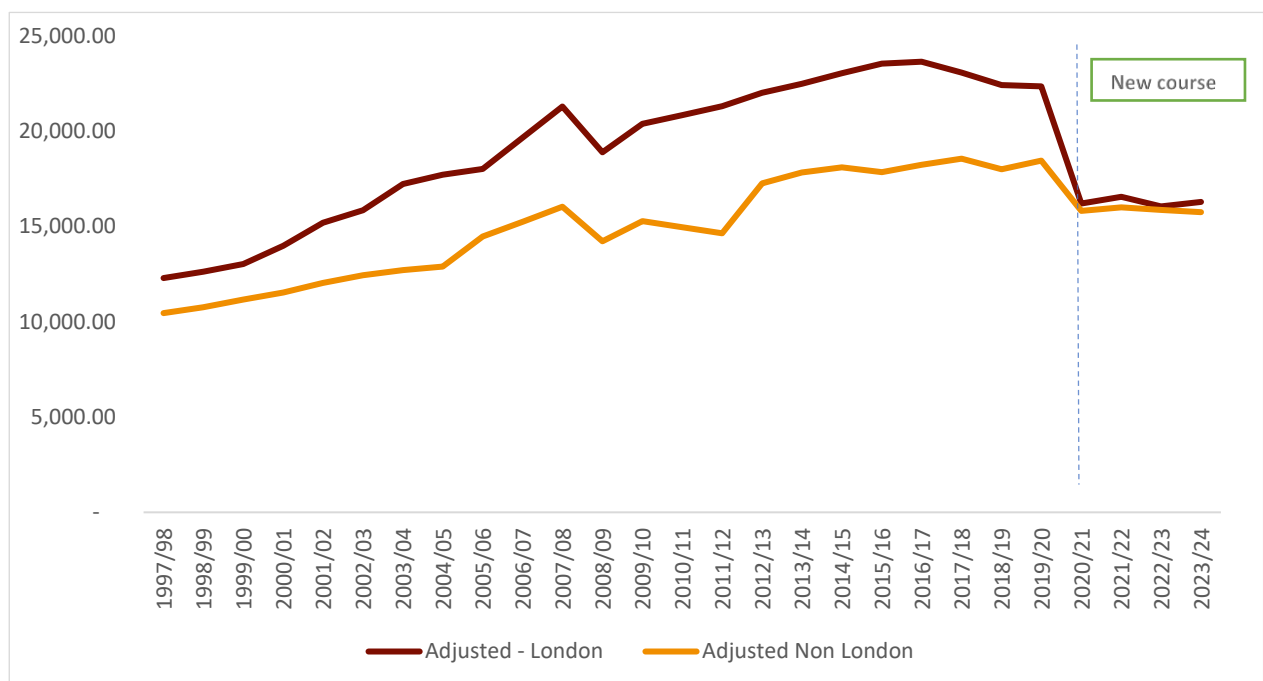
ANNEX 3 - FEES

- 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.

BAR
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Bar Training 2024

Statistics on enrolment, results, and student progression overall

Produced by the Bar Standards Board Research Team

Published

Executive Summary

1. This report details trends in vocational training to become a barrister, and student progression on to the professional stage of training in England and Wales. It covers the period from 2011/12 to 2023/24, a period which contains the transition from the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), which ran from 2011/12-2019/20 to the Bar training courses offered from 2020/21 following the Future Bar Training reforms.
2. There are several areas detailed within the report, and these can broadly be divided into:
 - Details on course providers and course fees;
 - trends in enrolment on Bar training courses;
 - trends in student results; and
 - progression on to pupillage following on from Bar training.
3. **Course providers and the cost of training over time**
 - As of the 2023/24 academic year, there are 10 providers offering Bar training courses at 20 sites. There have been two additional providers of the course and six additional sites added by an already existing provider compared to the final year of the BPTC, 2019/20. Vocational Bar training courses are offered via several different pathways and on a part-time basis at several providers.
 - On average, course fees from 2020/21 onwards have decreased quite substantially compared to the fees charged for the BPTC. On average, the drop in the cost of Bar training would have saved students over £4,000 in tuition fees in 2023/24 compared to 2019/20 after adjusting for inflation.¹
4. **Enrolment on Bar training courses**
 - Enrolment on Bar training courses increased in 2020/21 compared to the final year of the BPTC and has continued increasing for subsequent academic years of the new course. In 2023/24 2,406 students enrolled on Bar training courses, compared to 1,685 in 2019/20.
 - **Pathways** – Enrolment on the four-step training pathway declined slightly in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21. However, uptake of this pathway increased notably between 2022/23 and 2023/24. Only two providers currently offer this format: the Inns of Court College of Advocacy and the University of Northumbria.

¹ To Q1 2022/23 prices using the UK Government GDP deflator.

- **Study mode** - The number of students enrolling part-time on Bar training courses has remained relatively stable over time, but as the number of students enrolled overall has increased, the proportion of students studying part-time has decreased. Throughout the period of analysis, most part-time students have been UK domiciled prior to enrolment.
- **Degree class** - The proportion of Bar training students with a first-class degree has increased over time, and the proportion enrolling with a lower second-class degree has decreased.
- **Domicile²** - The proportion of overseas domiciled students, including students from the EU, undertaking vocational Bar training each academic year remained relatively stable at around 45 per cent of all students between 2015/16 and 2021/22, having increased from 35 per cent of all students from 2011/12. In the last two academic years, this has increased to 50% of students.
- **Ethnicity** – From 2011/12-2023/24, around 80 percent of students domiciled overseas prior to enrolment on Bar training were from an Asian/Asian British ethnic background each year. The proportion of UK domiciled students from a White ethnic background has decreased throughout the period of analysis, going from around 70 per cent in 2013/14 to 58 per cent in 2023/24 – this decrease has seen a corresponding increase in the proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the increase principally driven by those from Asian/Asian British backgrounds, and those from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds.
- **Gender**- There has been a greater proportion of female students enrolling in more recent years compared to that seen in 2011/12-2015/16 – this change has been mostly driven by differences seen for UK domiciled students. For example, in 2011/12 around 53 per cent of UK domiciled students were female, compared to around 63 per cent in 2023/24.

5. Student results on Bar training

- It is difficult to determine trends in student results between years from this report, given the change in the format of Bar training from 2020/21 onwards, and due to this report not including snapshots of results taken in the past for comparison between years.
- It is possible to comment on differences seen within demographic groups, but with the caveat that we only control for degree classification when presenting results, and there are other variables related to student results that are not controlled for. When looking at differences within demographic groups, the following trends are seen:

² Guidance note for residence, domicile and remittance basis [here](#)

Part 1 – Public

- **Degree class** – Based on trends seen on the BPTC, it would appear that well over half of those with any degree classification will go on to pass the course overall, and that there are relatively large differences in the proportion of students passing Bar training courses by first degree classification, with those with a first class degree performing better than those with a 2:1, who in turn are more likely to pass than those with a 2:2 overall.
- **Study mode and age** - For BPTC students enrolled between 2011/12-2018/19 (a period which may represent longer term trends better than more recent years), part-time students are slightly less likely to have completed the course, and more likely to have withdrawn from the course in comparison to full time students. This may be partly related to age, as part time students are more likely to be aged 35+, and such students also appear to be slightly more likely to withdraw/not complete a Bar training course.
- **Disability** – There appears to be some relationship between disability and results on Bar training, with those with a declared disability slightly more likely than those with no declared disability to have not yet completed Bar training when controlling for first degree classification.
- **Domicile** – Overall, results across degree classification are quite similar for those domiciled in the UK and those domiciled overseas prior to enrolment, and differences seen may be more related to study mode (as more UK students are part-time, it will take such students longer to finish the course, and this will affect the proportions passing to some extent).
- **Ethnicity** - For those with a 2:1 degree (there are more students with a 2:1, giving more reliable comparisons by ethnicity), there are some differences between those from different ethnic backgrounds in the proportion passing the course. The differences seen are particularly pronounced for those from Black/Black British backgrounds, with such students slightly less likely to pass the course compared to those from other ethnic groups for several cohorts.
- **Gender** – When comparing results on Bar training between male and female students, there does not appear to be any clear trend seen across all years and degree classifications. Differences in pass rates by gender are generally quite small across years.

6. Student progression onto pupillage

- It is also difficult to determine trends in student progression on to pupillage between years from this report, given that Bar training graduates have up to five years in which to gain pupillage, and so those graduating in more recent years would be expected to have lower pupillage rates than those graduating five or more years ago. There are some trends that we can comment on within demographic groups, but with the caveat that only first-degree classification, and degree institution have been controlled for.
- **Degree class** – Overall, out of those who pass the course, those with a first-class degree go onto gain pupillage in the greatest proportions, with around 70 per cent of such UK domiciled course graduates gaining pupillage in the long run. Those with other degree classes do not gain pupillage in such proportions, with typically between 40 and 50 percent of UK domiciled course graduates with a 2:1, and less than one in five UK domiciled course graduates with a 2:2, going onto pupillage. It is likely that some of the difference in the proportion of a cohort gaining pupillage for each degree class is due to differences in results on vocational training for BPTC students (which co-vary alongside degree class).
- **Degree institution** – There is a clear difference in the proportions gaining pupillage when comparing different groupings for university. Oxbridge graduates gain pupillage in greater proportions than those who attended another Russell Group university, who in turn gain pupillage in greater proportions than those attending other UK universities - part of this trend may be due to vocational course results correlating with degree institution, but it is unlikely it can solely be explained by this given results from previous research, which found a strong relationship between degree institution and likelihood of gaining pupillage and controlled for BPTC grade.
- **Age** - When controlling for degree class, similar proportions of UK domiciled course graduates aged under 25 and those aged 25-34 go on to gain pupillage. It appears that a lower proportion of those aged 35+ go on to gain pupillage when controlling for degree class, although this may be partly related to studying the course on a part-time basis. These trends also appear to be present when degree institution is controlled for.
- **Disability** - No clear trend emerges from the data regarding student progression by disability status. In some instances, for degree class groupings, those with a declared disability have gained pupillage in greater proportions, and in some instances, the opposite is seen.

- **Ethnicity** – Ethnic background does show some relationship with the proportion of a cohort gaining pupillage following on from a vocational Bar training course. UK domiciled course graduates from minoritised ethnic backgrounds do not appear to gain pupillage in the same proportions as UK domiciled students from White ethnic backgrounds. This appears to be the case when degree class and first-degree institution are controlled for and appears to affect Asian/Asian British and Black/Black British students to a greater extent than those from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds.
- **Gender** – When controlling for degree institution, differences in the pupillage rate of female and male UK domiciled Bar training graduates are relatively small throughout the period of analysis. However, across the period of analysis, we have a record of around 6,500 females and 5,000 males completing Bar training. We also have a record of 2,374 females gaining pupillage, and 2,096 males. So, while the total number of female pupils does outnumber that of males, it is not to the same extent as may be expected based upon the extent to which female Bar training graduates outnumber male Bar training graduates.

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Cost of and format of Bar training

Format of Bar Training

1. Table 1 below gives an overview of the courses offered by providers for the last three academic years.

Table 1. Options for Bar training offered by provider - 2021/22-2023/2024

| 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 ³ | 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 St George's*, University of London I ⁴ | 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 | | X | | X | |
| The University of Law Birmingham | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X |
| The University of Law Bristol | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | |
| The University of Law Leeds | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X |
| The University of Law Liverpool | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | |
| The University of Law London | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X |
| The University of Law Manchester | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | |
| The University of Law Nottingham | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | |
| University of Hertfordshire | | | | | X | | X | | X | | X | |
| University of Northumbria ⁵ | 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 | |

*Previously known as City Law School

³ BPP offers Bar training with a specialist legal studies option as well.

⁴ CLS offers a specialist add on to the Bar training course as well.

⁵ UNN also offers an undergraduate degree with vocational Bar training incorporated

- The variety of pathways offered by the providers has stayed relatively stable year-on-year. Two providers still offer the course in two parts via the four-step pathway: the Inns of Court College of Advocacy (ICCA) and the University of Northumbria. Since 2022/23 the University of the West of England has stopped offering the four-step pathway and the Inns of Court College of Advocacy has stopped offering the three-step pathway. Most providers provide the option of incorporating vocational Bar training into a Master of Laws (LLM) course. Undertaking the course as a master’s degree may enable students to access a Postgraduate Master’s Loan offered by the government. Students are also able to apply for scholarships specific to Bar training.⁶

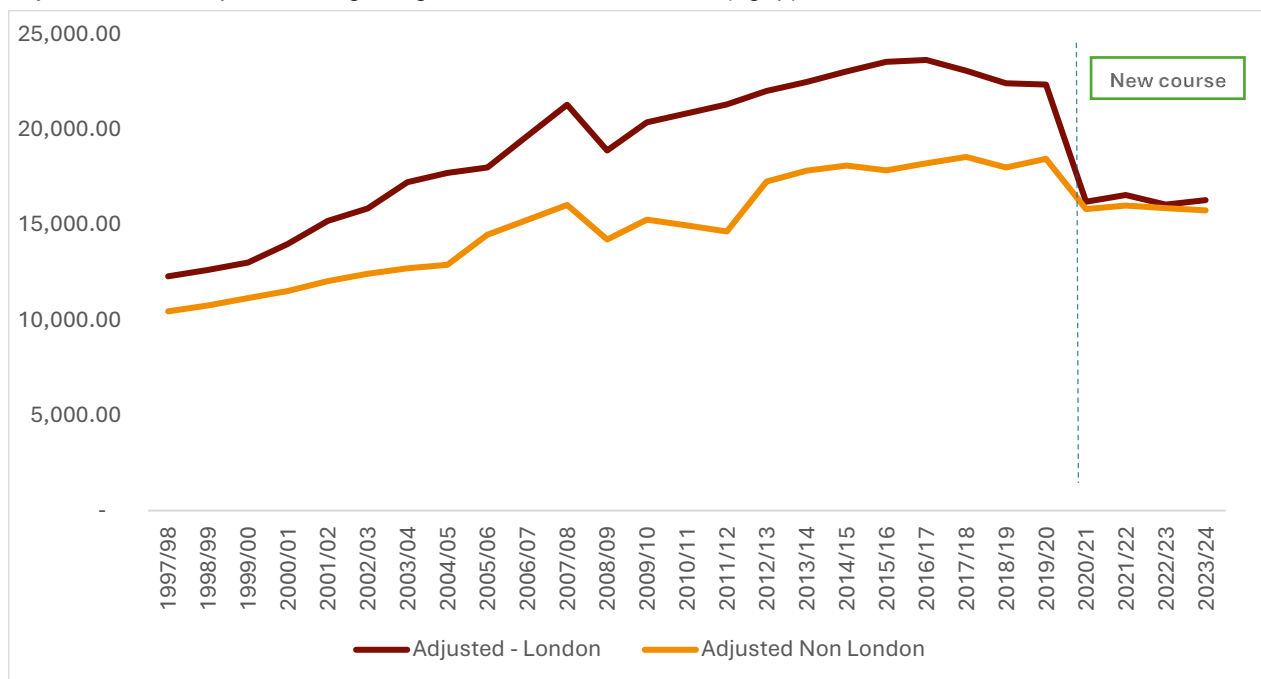
Cost of Bar training over time

- The chart below shows the inflation adjusted cost of vocational Bar training courses over time by location of provider (the figures are for the course overall – i.e. the full vocational stage of training). Figures are adjusted to 2022/23 prices using a UK Government published GDP deflator.⁷

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.

⁶ For more information on this see - <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/becoming-a-barrister/students-and-graduates/student-funding-and-scholarships.html>

⁷ Found here - [GDP deflators at market prices, and money GDP September 2024 \(Quarterly National Accounts\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp)

4. Overall, the cost of training has increased above inflation over time, with large increases occurring from the latter half of the 1990s all the way up to the first half of the 2010s, after which fee increases seen on the BPTC were lower. The implementation of the new courses from 2020/21 onwards saw a drop in the fees charged across the majority of providers. The drop in the cost of the course is particularly notable for providers based in London, as shown in Chart 1.
5. 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.
6. 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 £16,000, £14,700, and £15,700 respectively.
7. For the latest year of entry, 2023/24, the average fees charged by Bar training provider for UK domiciled students taking the three-step pathway was around £15,700, with London sites charging around £16,500 on average, and non-London providers charging nearly £15,000 on average. The University of Cardiff is one of the most expensive providers of Bar training, if removed from the non-London providers calculation the average cost is reduced by around 6% to £14,200.
8. Overall, based on the fees charged by provider and enrolment figures, the sum of fees paid across all providers when not adjusting for inflation is estimated at around £29 million in 2019/20, £34 million in 2022/23, and more than £37.5 million in 2023/24. An increase in student numbers (which is detailed in the next section) appears to have largely made up for the decrease in tuition fees in terms of the total revenue generated by Bar training courses across all providers.

Enrolments

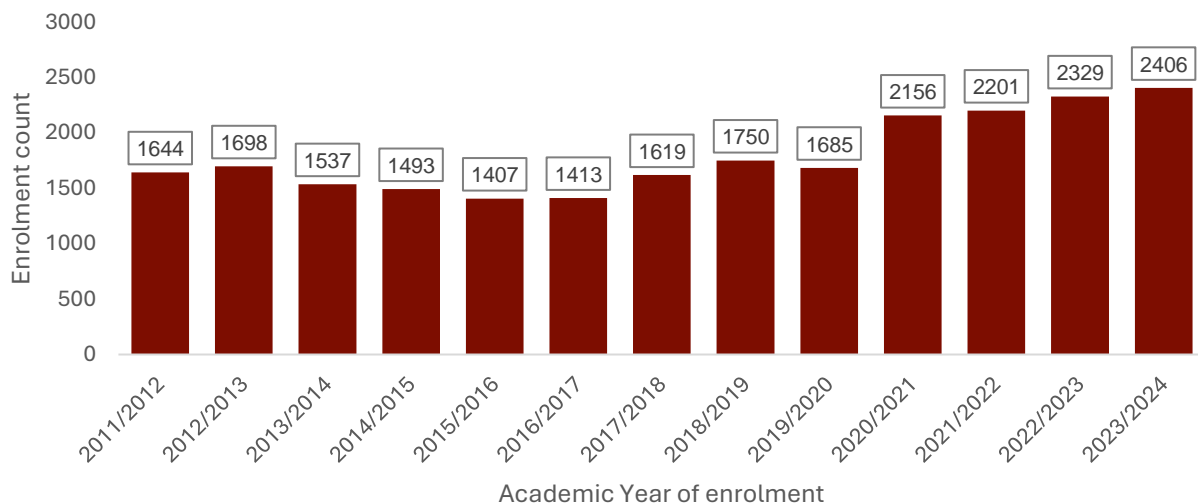
9. This section of the report provides information on the demographics of those enrolling on Bar training in England and Wales from 2011/12 to 2023/24. The statistics presented have been calculated based upon the BSB's record of student results and progression as of August 2024.

10. Our record of enrolment data for the 2022/23 academic year has been updated since the last report, as when the previous report was published, we did not have complete enrolment data for that academic year.
11. Statistics are only presented where there are 20 or more students in a group.

Overall

12. 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 the 2022/2023 cohort when compared to the 2023 edition of this report, and now represents a full academic year.

Chart 2. Enrolments by year overall

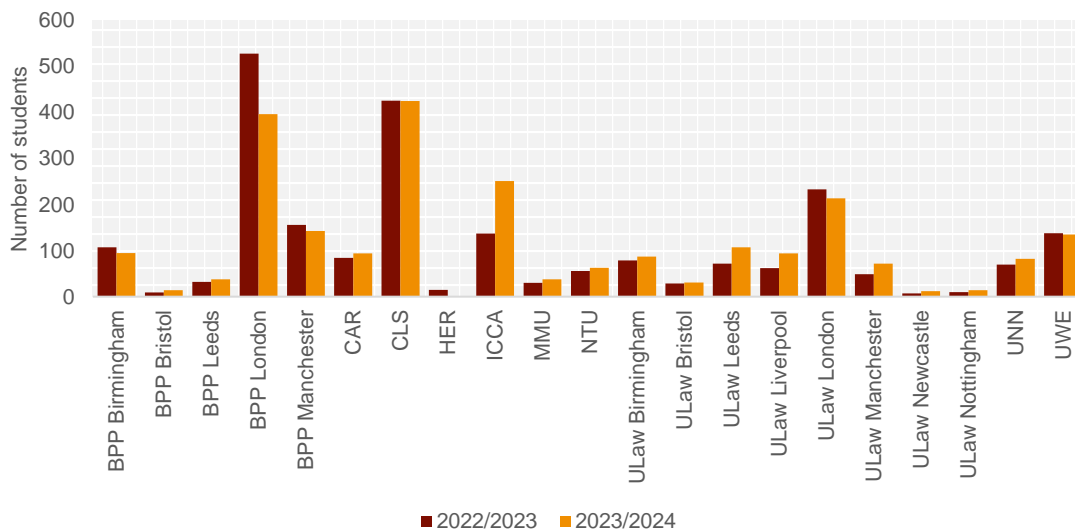


13. From 2011/12-2019/20 the vocational stage of training to become a barrister in England and Wales was the BPTC. Enrolment on the BPTC declined overall from 2011/12 to 2016/17, and then increased in the last few years of the course. For courses offered from 2020/21 onwards, overall enrolment figures have increased once again compared to the numbers on the BPTC. In 2023/24 there were nearly 10% more students enrolling on Bar training courses than during the 2021/2022 academic year.
14. 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. Chart 3 below, gives the number of enrolments by provider for the last two academic years. Enrolment is now possible at multiple starting times per year across training providers – prior to 2020/21 this was not the case.

15. The largest sites in terms of number of students in 2023/24 were BPP London, City St George’s, University of London (CLS, previously known as City Law School), The Inns of Court College of Advocacy (ICCA) and University of Law (ULAW) London - enrolment at each in 2023/24 was greater than 200 students. There were also several providers with more than 100 students in 2023/24 – BPP Manchester, ULAW Leeds and University of West of England (UWE). ICCA had approximately 100 more students in 2023/2024 than in 2022/2023

16. 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 are 1,287 and 1,119 respectively.

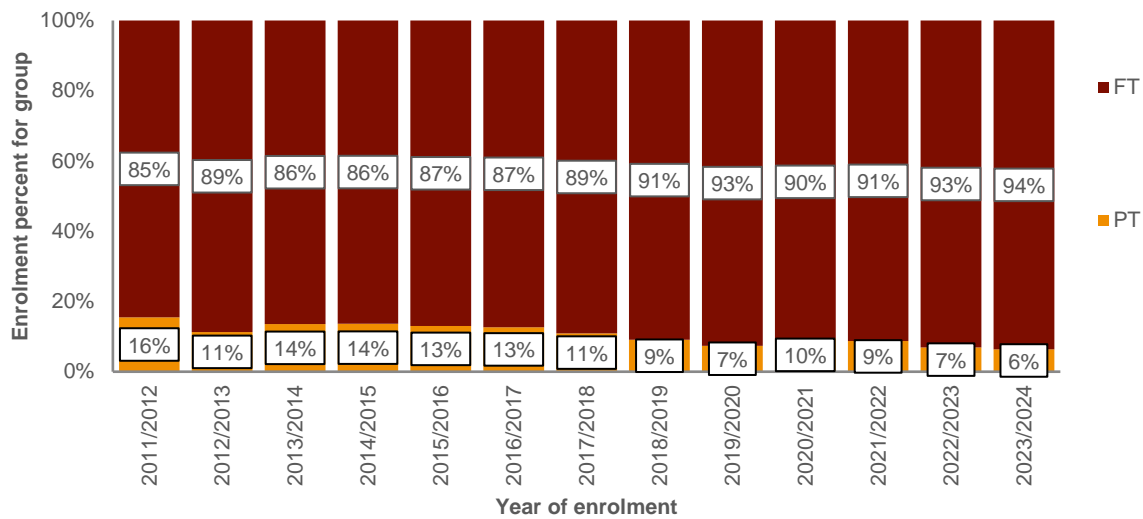
Chart 3. Enrolments by training provider for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024



Study mode and pathway

17. 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)



18. 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.

19. When looking at Table 2, the total number of part-time students, 1% of overseas domiciled students took a Bar training course on a part-time basis, compared to around 17% of UK domiciled students. Study mode also has a strong relationship with age, particularly for students domiciled in the UK prior to Bar training enrolment.

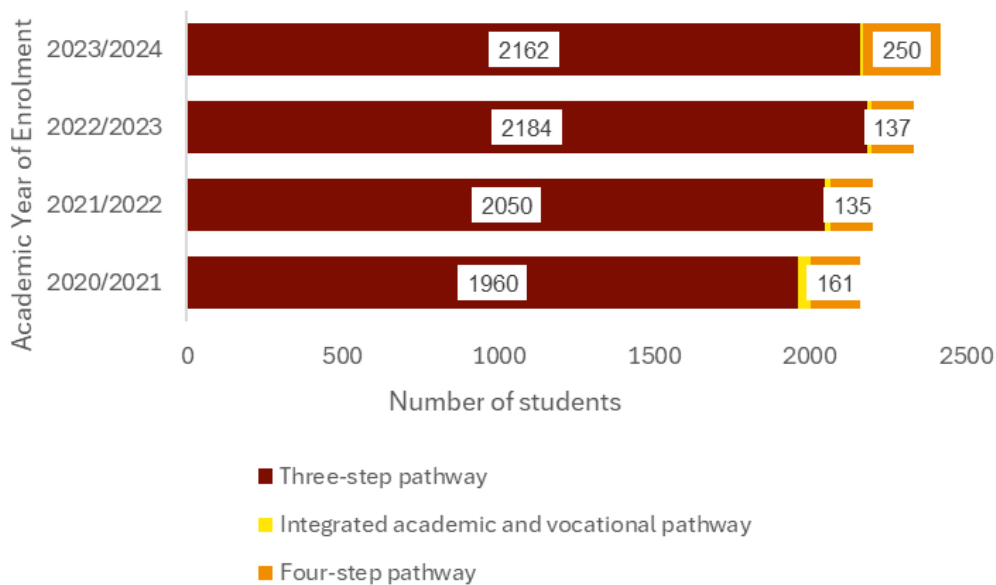
Table 2. Study mode by age range for students enrolling on Bar training. Data is based on since recording began in 2011/2012

| Age Range | Overseas | | | UK | | |
|-----------|----------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-------|
| | FT | PT | Total | FT | PT | Total |
| 18 to 24 | 99% | 1% | 100% | 90% | 10% | 100% |
| 25 to 34 | 96% | 4% | 100% | 77% | 23% | 100% |
| 35+ | 86% | 14% | 100% | 58% | 42% | 100% |
| Total | 98% | 1% | 100% | 83% | 17% | 100% |

Prior to 2015/2016 we have missing data for mode of study which explains any % discrepancies

20. 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)



21. 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, the 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. Table 2 shows the profile of the Four-Step pathway, the data displays a slight skew towards an older age group.

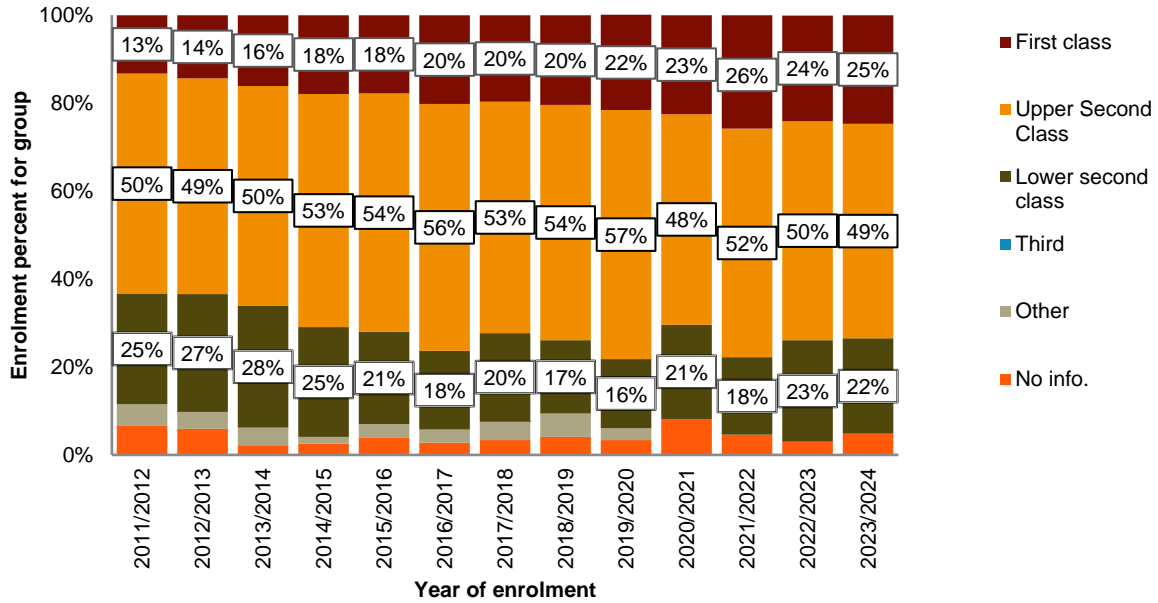
Table 3. Comparison of enrolment on Four-Step Pathway by age range for students enrolling on Bar training.

| Age Range | Overseas | | | UK | | |
|-----------|----------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-------|
| | FT | PT | Total | FT | PT | Total |
| 18 to 25 | 99% | 1% | 100% | 90% | 11% | 100% |
| 26 to 35 | 95% | 5% | 100% | 73% | 27% | 100% |
| 36+ | 86% | 14% | 100% | 58% | 42% | 100% |
| Total | 98% | 2% | 100% | 83% | 17% | 100% |

First degree classification

22. Chart 6 below shows the first-degree classification of those enrolling on Bar training courses over the last five academic years.

Chart 6. Enrolment on Bar training over time by first degree classification (% of cohort)

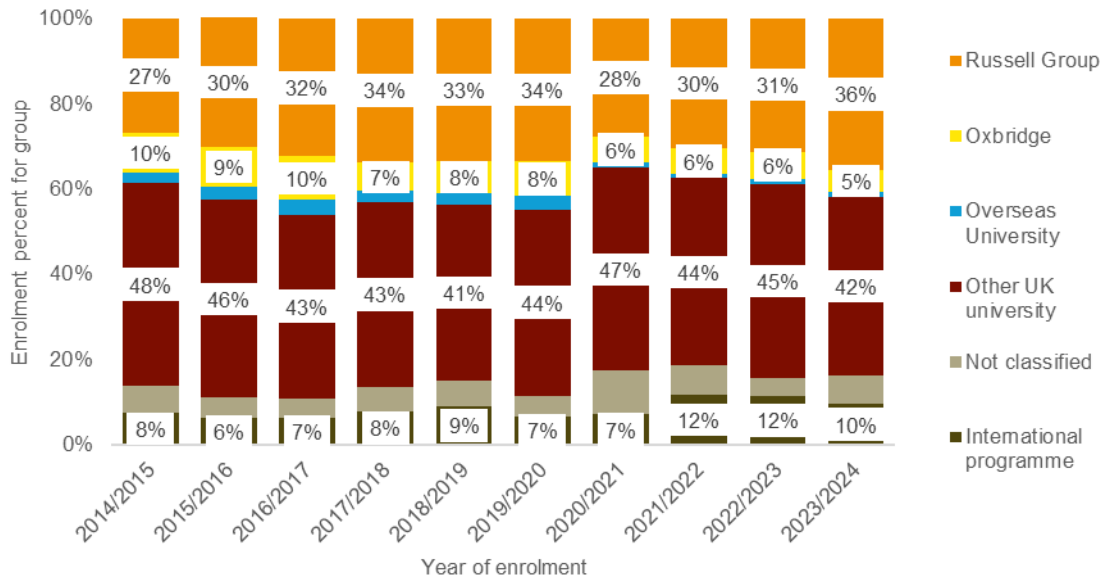


23. Since 2011/2012 there has been an increase in the proportion of students enrolling with a first-class degree, and a reduction in the proportion of students enrolling with a lower second-class degree over time, although this has started to trend upwards in more recent years.

University Attended

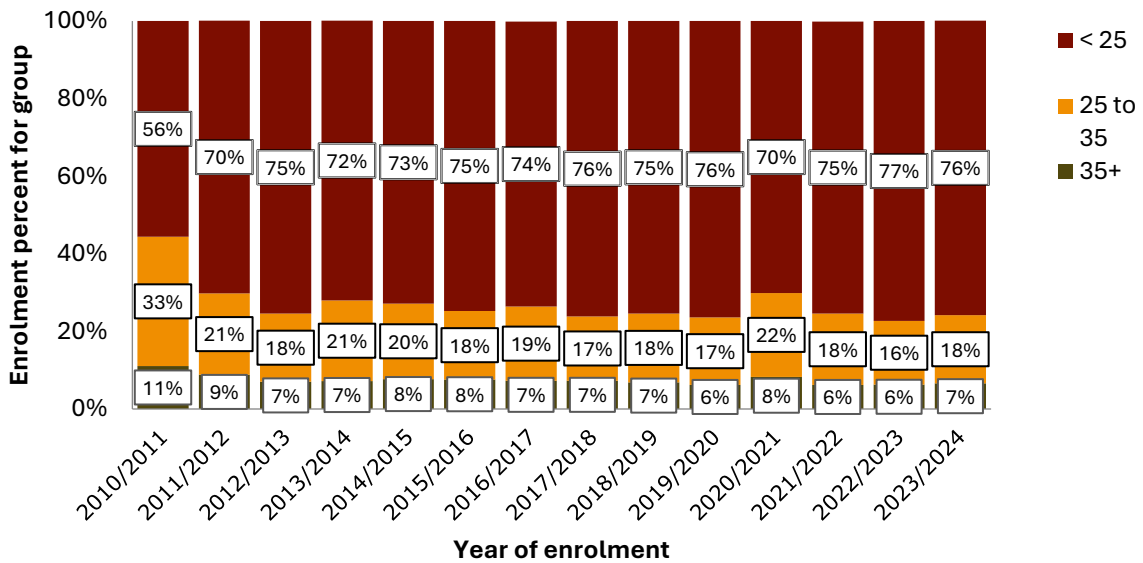
24. Chart 7 below shows the university institution attended of those enrolling on Bar training courses from 2020/2021 to 2023/2024. Data prior to this point has not been included in the analysis.

Chart 7. Enrolment on Bar training over time by first degree institution (% of cohort)



Age

Chart 8. Enrolment on Bar training over time by age when enrolling (% of cohort)

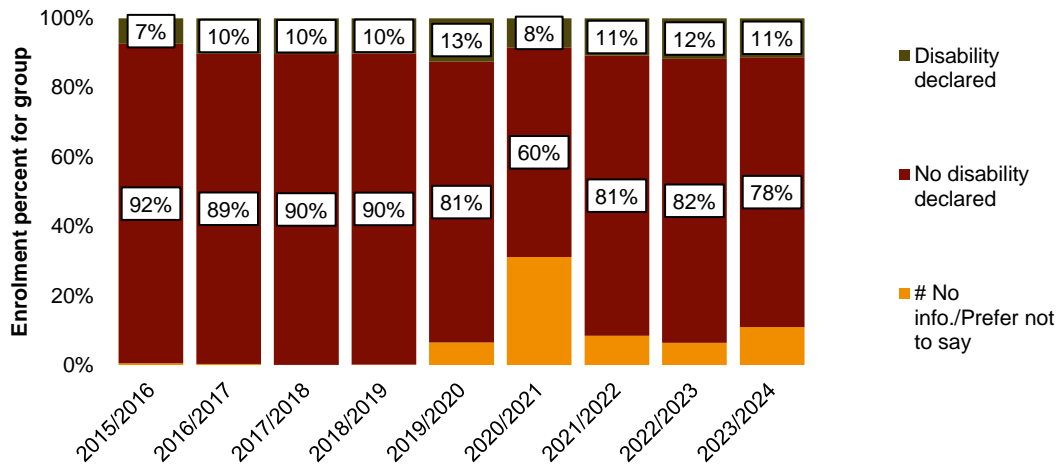


25. Chart 8 above breaks the enrolments for each academic year down by age range. Overall, the average age of the students enrolled on the Bar Training course has remained stable at approximately 25 years old.

Disability

26. Chart 9 below breaks down the proportions of students on vocational Bar training courses by disability status. Overall, the proportion of those with a declared disability has remained relatively stable over time, at around 10 per cent of students. Data is not shown for 2011/12-2013/14 as we do not have a good record of disability data for students during this time.

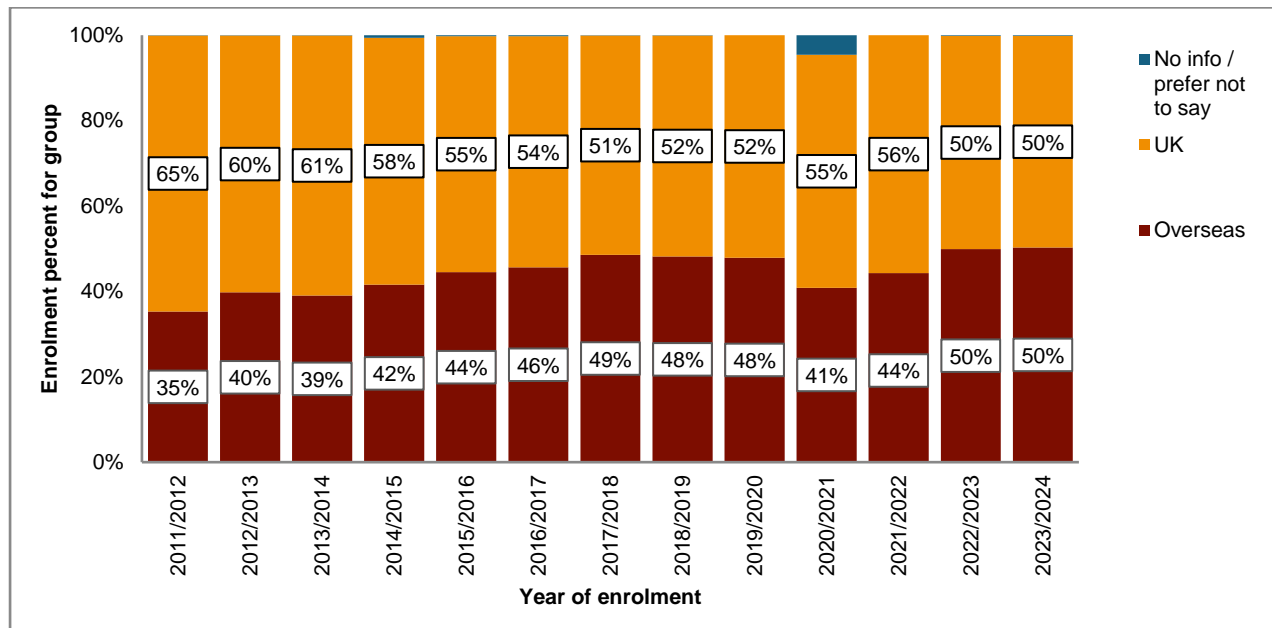
Chart 9. Enrolment on Bar training over time by disability status (% of cohort)



Domicile

27. Chart 10 below breaks down the proportions of students on vocational Bar training courses by region of domicile prior to enrolment. The proportion of overseas domiciled students undertaking Bar training has remained half of the cohort over the last 2 academic years.

Chart 10. Enrolment on Bar training over time by domicile (% of cohort)



28. Since the Bar Training reforms were introduced in 2020/2021 the number of overseas domiciled students has steadily increased. We are seeing a steady increase in both the proportion of overseas domiciled students and the actual number of overseas students enrolling in Bar Training.

Ethnicity

29. Chart 11 and Table 3. below give a breakdown of the ethnicity of those enrolling on vocational Bar training courses by domicile and academic year of enrolment. They are separated by domicile as overseas domiciled students have a different ethnic profile compared to UK domiciled students. The date range for each group ranges from 2012/2013 to 2023/2024 as opposed to the entirety of the Bar Training data collection period. Overseas domiciled students include those domiciled in the European Union.

Chart 11. Enrolment on Bar training over time by domicile and ethnicity (% of cohort)

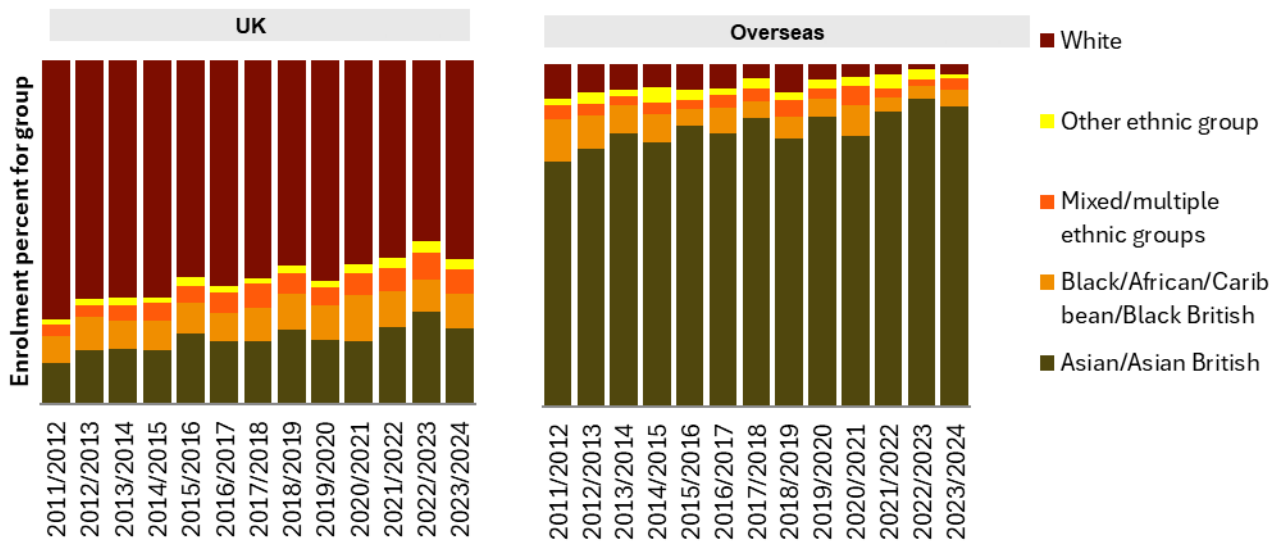


Table 3. Enrolment on Bar training over time by domicile and ethnicity (% of cohort – excluding non-responses) – every other year is included

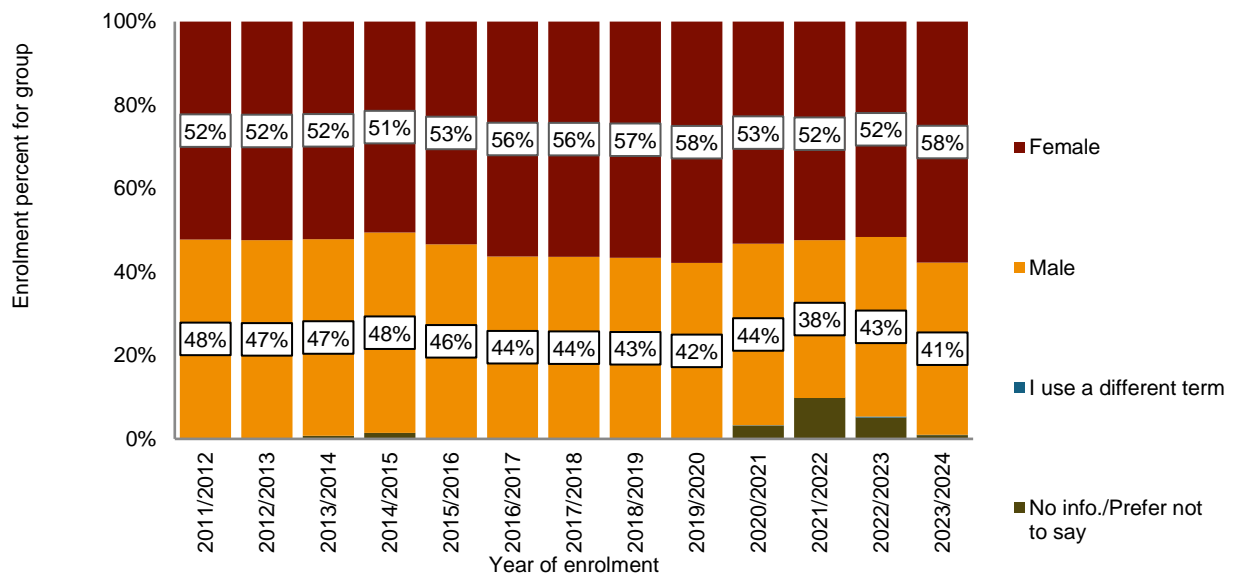
| Academic year of enrolment | Overseas | | | | | UK | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------|
| | Asian/Asian British | Black/Black British | Mixed/Multi. eth. grps | Other ethnic grp | White | Asian/Asian British | Black/Black British | Mixed/Multi. eth. grps | Other ethnic grp | White |
| 13/14 | 80% | 8% | 3% | 2% | 7% | 16% | 8% | 5% | 2% | 69% |
| 15/16 | 82% | 5% | 3% | 3% | 8% | 21% | 9% | 5% | 3% | 63% |
| 17/18 | 84% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 18% | 10% | 7% | 2% | 63% |
| 19/20 | 85% | 6% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 19% | 10% | 5% | 2% | 64% |
| 21/22 | 86% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 22% | 10% | 7% | 3% | 58% |
| 23/24 | 88% | 5% | 3% | 1% | 3% | 22% | 10% | 7% | 3% | 58% |

30. Each year, more than eight in ten overseas domiciled students are from an Asian/Asian British background.
31. In both the Overseas domiciled and UK domiciled students' the proportion of Asian/Asian British backgrounds has been increasing since 2013/2014. The growth in the proportion of UK domiciled students from Black/Black British backgrounds has not been as large (8% in 2013/2014 to 10% in 2023/2024). The percentage of UK domiciled students from White ethnic backgrounds has decreased over time, from 69 percent for students enrolled in 2013/14 to 58 percent in 2023/2024. In overseas domiciled students there has been a decrease in the percentage of students from Black/African/Caribbean/Black British backgrounds (8% in 2013/2014 to 5% in 2023/2024)

Gender

32. Chart 12 below gives a breakdown of gender on vocational Bar training courses over time. Since 2011/2012 the actual number of males enrolling in the Bar Training has fluctuated over the years, but looking at the percentage profile, the proportion of male students is decreasing.

Chart 12. Enrolment on Bar training over time by gender (% of cohort)



33. When further analysing the age data by domicile, the proportion of female overseas students, and the proportion of UK domiciled female students by gender were similar on each year of the BPTC. From 2020/21, the difference between gender by UK domiciled students is significantly different, whereas Overseas domiciles the gender profile between male and female students is the same.

Table 4. Enrolment on Bar training courses by gender and domicile

| Year of enrolment - Grouped | Overseas | | | UK | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|------|-------|--------|------|-------|
| | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total |
| 11/ 12 to 15/16 | 52% | 48% | 100% | 53% | 47% | 100% |
| 16/17 to 19/20 | 56% | 44% | 100% | 57% | 43% | 100% |
| 21/22 to 23/24 | 50% | 50% | 100% | 62% | 38% | 100% |

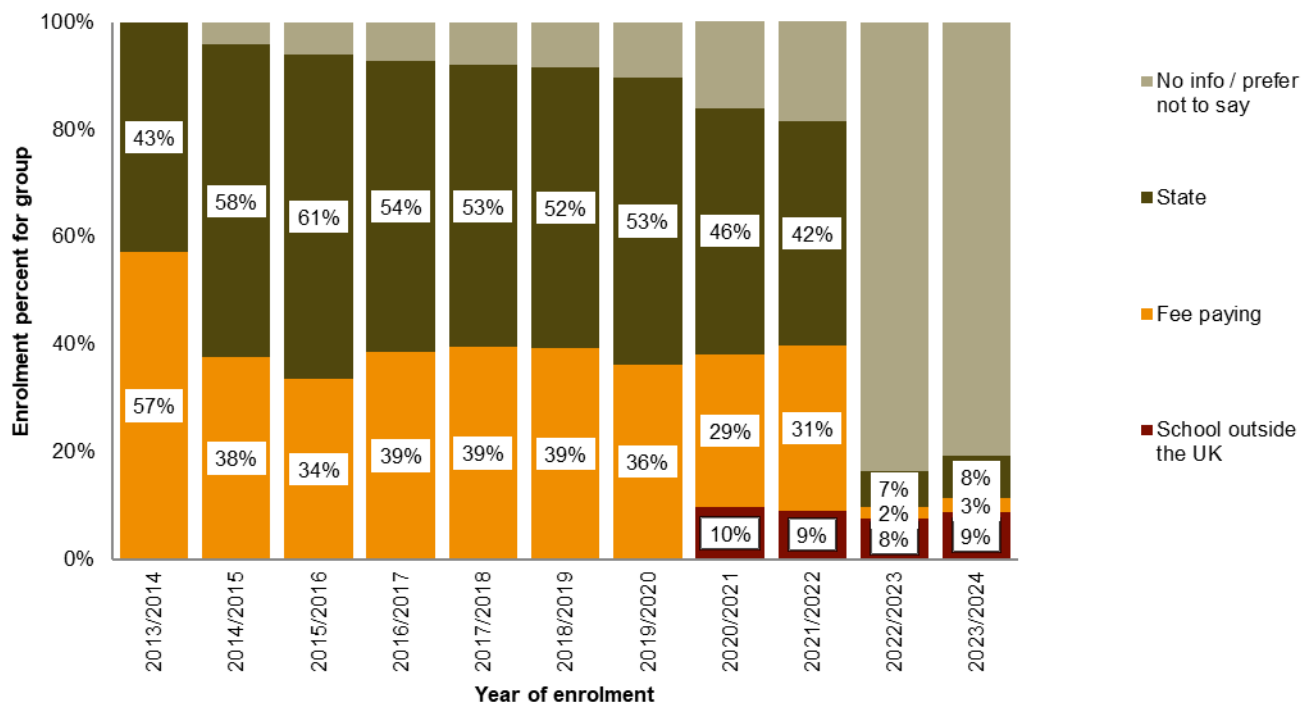
School Attended

34. Chart 13 below breaks down the type of school mainly attended between the ages of 11-18 for those enrolling on vocational Bar training. Data are not shown for 2011/12-2013/14 as data on school attended were collected through the

Part 1 – Public

BCAT, and the BCAT was not in existence for much of this time. From 2022/23 onwards, following the removal of the requirement for students to take the BCAT, the BSB is reliant on students providing information on school attended via registration on MyBar (as unlike other demographic data, this information is not collected by Bar Training providers). As a result, the proportion of students providing this information has fallen from over 80% to less than 20%.

Chart 13. Enrolment on Bar training over time by type of school attended (% of cohort)⁸



⁸ From 2020/21, data on school attended has been collected via MyBar in addition to data collected via the Bar Course Aptitude Test. MyBar includes an 'outside the UK' option for school attended, which is why this category first appears in 2020/21.

Student results

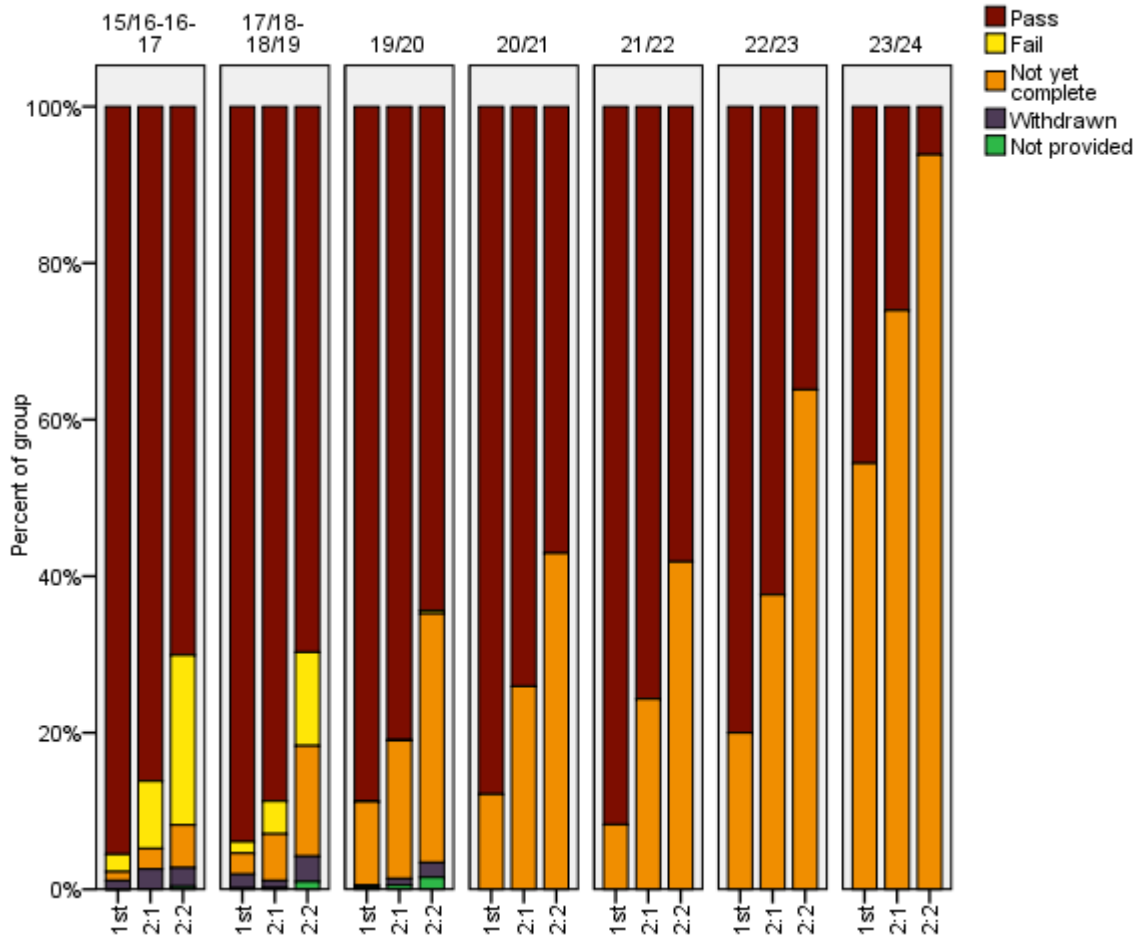
35. This section of the report presents statistics on student results over time. The statistics are calculated from the BSB's record of student results as of August 2024. An important aspect to consider regarding the lower pass rates for recent years is that this is due to more recent cohorts of students having had less time in which to complete the course. This makes comparing between years difficult, as we would need to compare with relevant snapshots taken at set points in time to understand how students enrolled in recent years are performing in comparison to those enrolled in prior years.
36. To note, the new course data only read passed and not yet complete – students have five years from first enrolment to complete the vocational course, and none has yet reached that period. In this report “Not yet complete” means the student has not yet passed all the assessments on the course, whether this is due to not yet having taken all assessments, or not passing one or more assessments if they have taken them all.
37. Some years of enrolment on the BPTC have been grouped together to make it easier to display trends over a greater period. Statistics are only presented where there are 20 or more students in a group.

Overall

38. Chart 14 above shows results by degree classification on Bar training courses over time. Differences between those with different degree classifications in terms of the proportion who failed or who are not yet complete on a Bar training course can clearly be seen.⁹
39. Overall, students with first class degrees typically have a higher pass rate compared to those with an upper second degree. The same trend can be seen with students who have achieved a 2.1, they will typically have a higher pass rate for the Bar training course compared to those who achieved a 2.2 in their first degree.
40. Based on trends seen on the BPTC (bar training pre 2020/21), it would appear that eight in ten with any degree classification will go on to pass the course overall – for those enrolled from 2011/12-2019/20, the BSB has a record of around 93 per cent of those with a first-class degree, 85 per cent of those with a 2:1, and 66 per cent of those with a 2:2 having passed the course as of September 2024.

⁹ Many of those in our records who are not yet complete on a course and who enrolled during the first half of the 2010s will be likely to have withdrawn from the course.

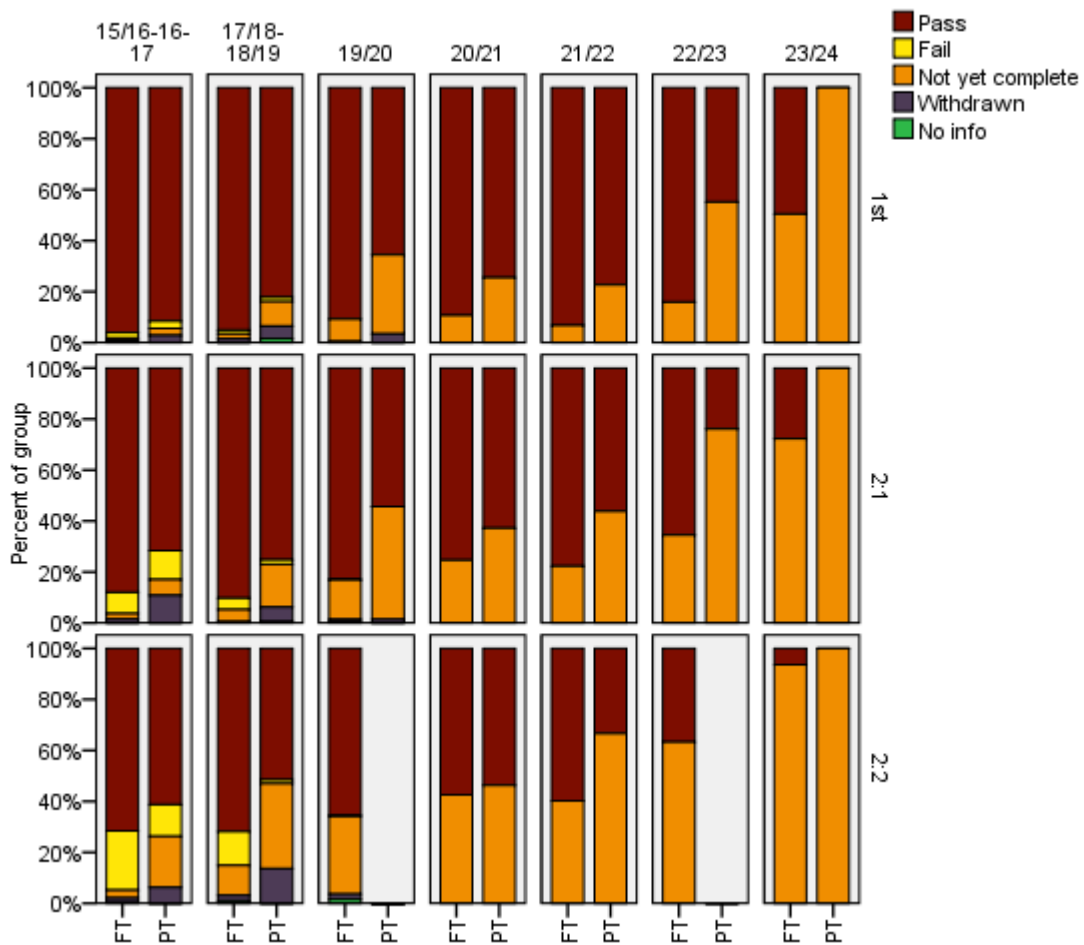
Chart 14. Results on Bar training over time by first degree classification (% of cohort)



Study Mode

41. Chart 15 below shows results on Bar training courses by mode of study. As would be expected, part time students enrolled in more recent years have lower pass rates on the course, as they would have had less opportunity to sit all modules and undertake resits.

Chart 15. Results on Bar training by degree class and study mode (% of cohort)

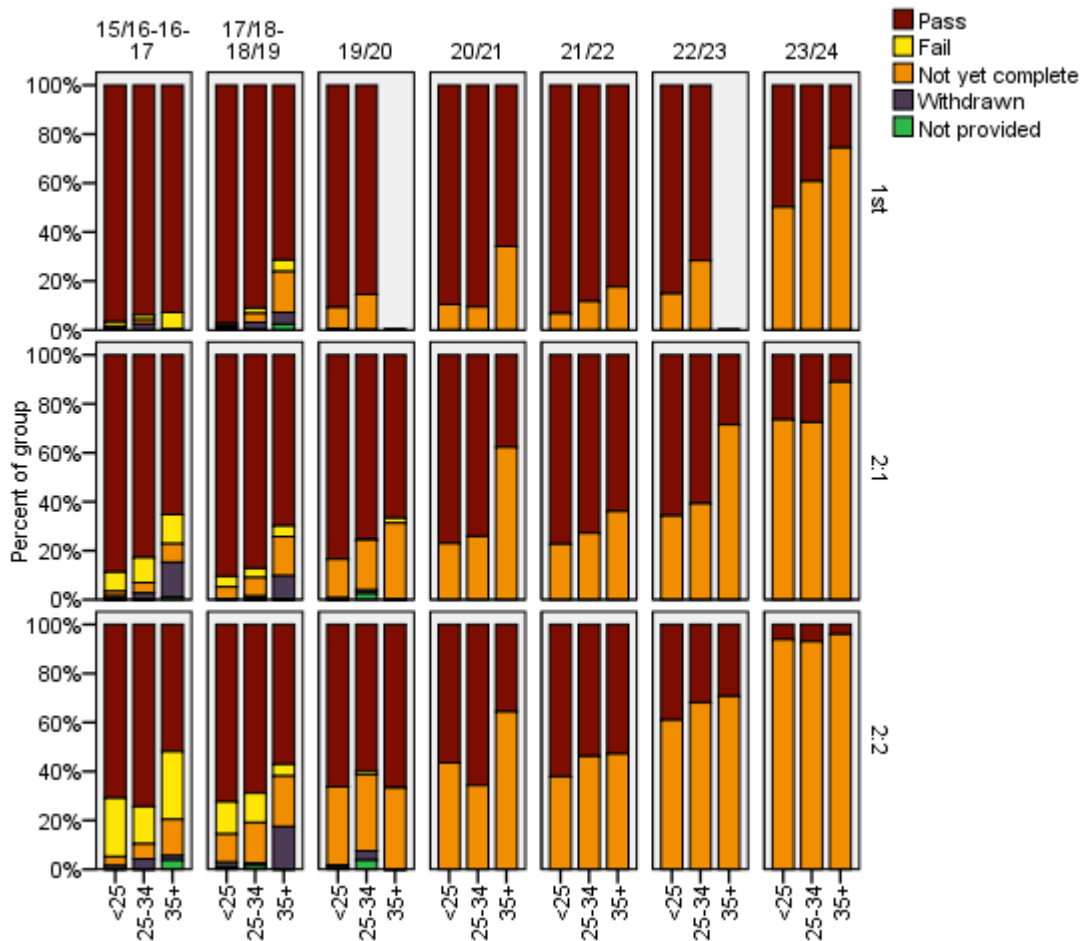


42. Part-time students are slightly less likely to have completed the course, and more likely to have withdrawn from the course in comparison to full time students. This may be partly related to age, from the academic enrolment year 2020/21 the average age for part-time students is 29.5 compared to full time students whose average age is 24.6.

Age

43. Chart 16 below shows results by age and degree classification on Bar training courses over time.

Chart 16. Results on Bar training by degree class and age (% of cohort)

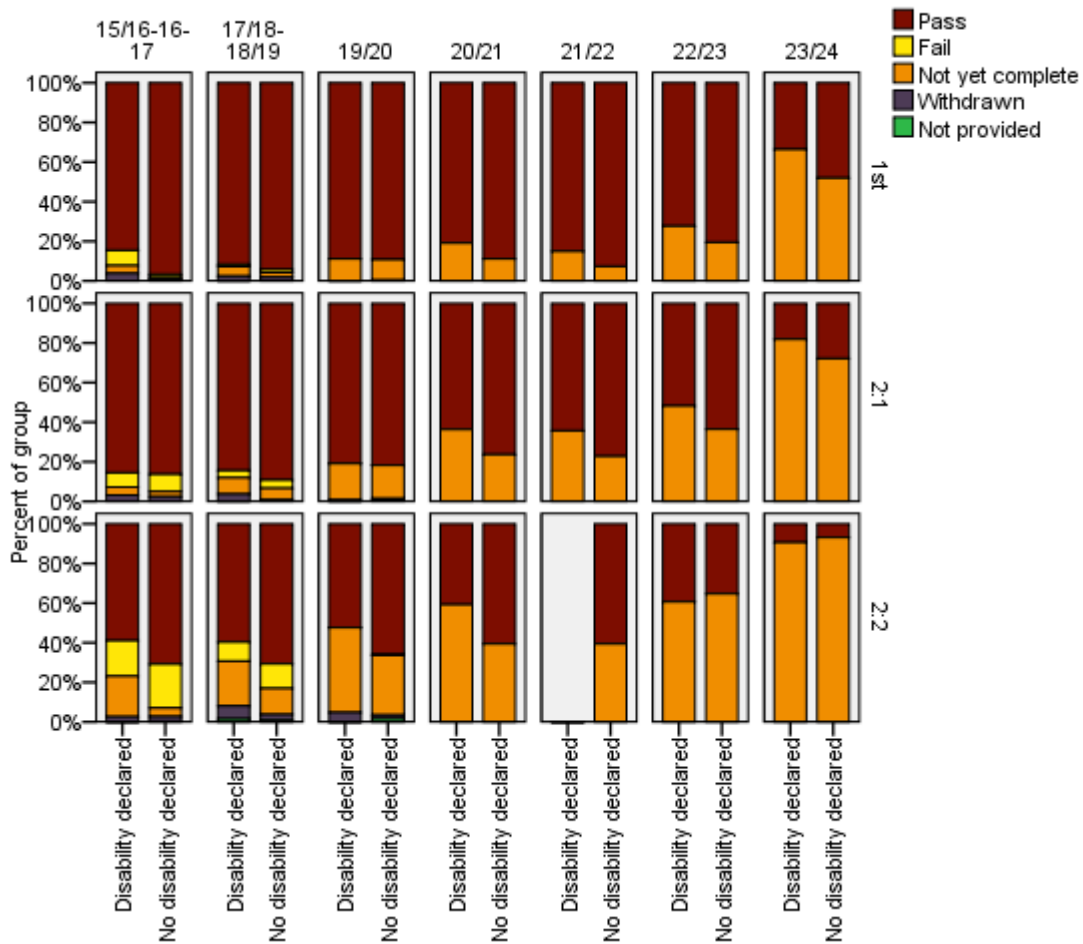


44. There appears to be some relationship between age and results on Bar training, with older students being slightly more likely to take slightly longer to complete the course. There also seems to be a relationship between the degree class, with those who achieved a First-Class degree more likely to have passed the course than those who passed their degree with a lower second.

Disability

45. Chart 17 below shows results by disability status and degree classification on Bar training courses over time.

Chart 17. Results on Bar training by degree classification and disability status (% of cohort)



46. Focusing on the data for the new course we can see there appears to be a relationship between disability and results on Bar training. Those who declared a disability are slightly more likely to have not yet completed Bar Training than those with no disability when controlling for first degree classification. As with all statistics on Bar training presented in this section, the trend seen may not be present if a greater number of variables were controlled for.

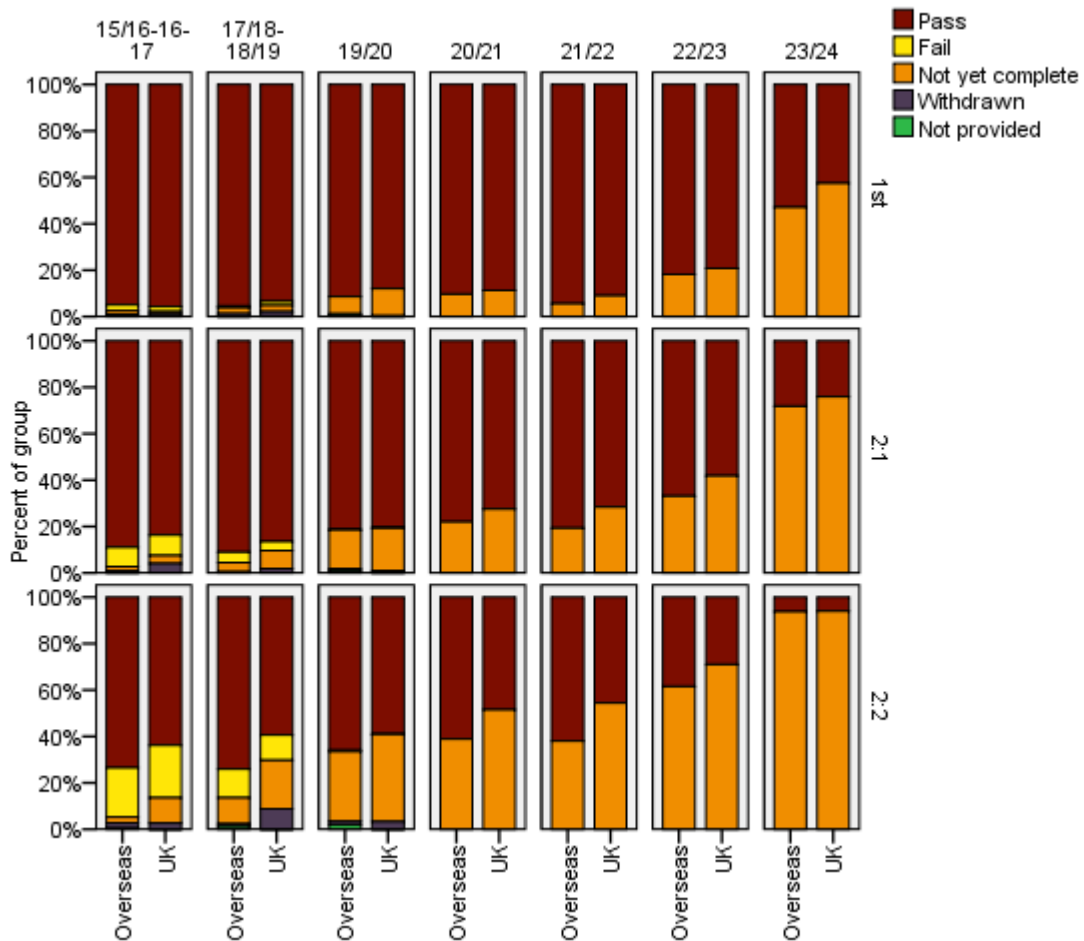
Domicile

47. The chart below shows overall results on Bar training courses by domicile prior to enrolment on the course. Overall, results across degree classification are similar for those domiciled in the UK and those domiciled overseas prior to enrolment.

48. There is one trend that stands out for the BPTC, which is that a slightly higher proportion of those domiciled in the UK with a lower second class degree are yet to complete the course. The same trend is seen for 2020/21 onwards across

degree class, although this may be more related to study mode than other factors, as UK domiciled students are more likely to undertake Bar training on a part time basis.

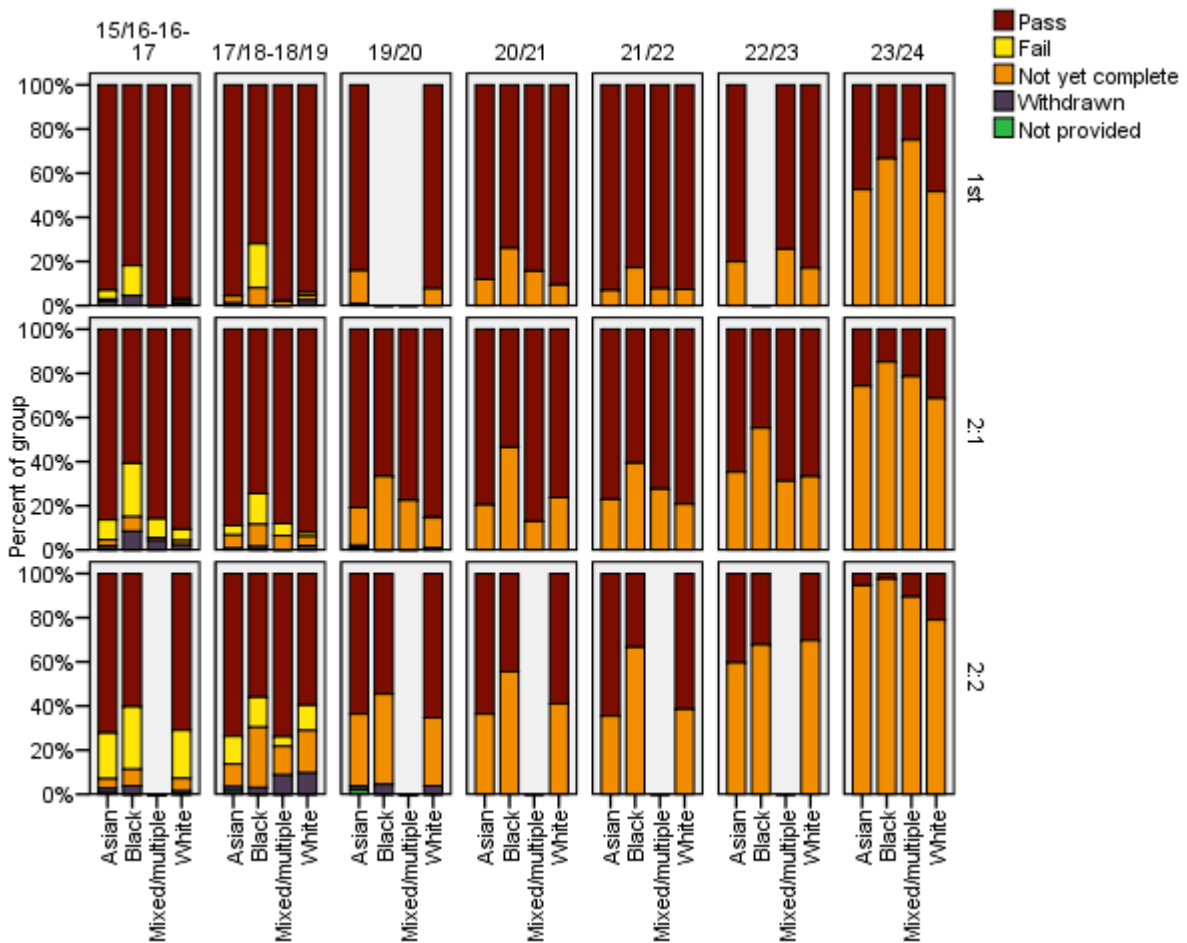
Chart 18. Results on Bar training by degree class and domicile (% of cohort)



Ethnicity

49. Chart 19 below shows overall results on Bar training over time by degree class and ethnicity. Results are only presented where there are 20 or more students in a relevant grouping.

Chart 19. Results on Bar training by degree class and ethnicity (% of cohort)

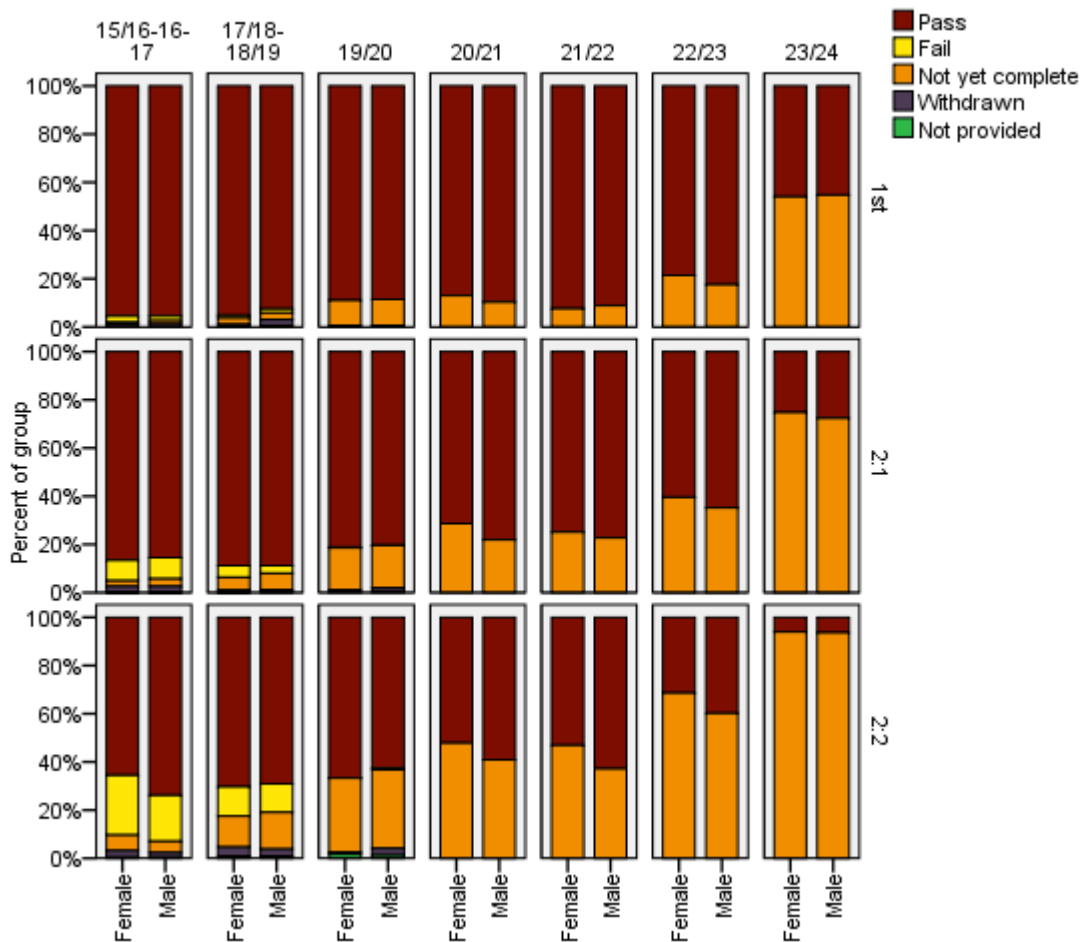


50. Overall, results suggest that at least for those with an upper or lower second-class degree, there are some differences between those from different ethnic backgrounds in terms of the proportion passing the course. The difference seen is more pronounced for those from Black/Black British backgrounds, with those from such backgrounds less likely to pass the course in comparison to those from other ethnic groups for several cohorts. There is a further chart (chart A1) in the appendices, giving the figures only for UK domiciled students with a 2:1 degree (the most numerous degree class for those enrolling).

Gender

51. Chart 20 below shows overall results on Bar training over time by degree class and gender. There does not appear to be any clear trend seen across all years and degree classifications. Differences in pass rates by gender are generally quite small across years and degree classifications.

Chart 20. Results on Bar training by degree class and gender (% of cohort)



Student Progression

52. Following completion of Bar training and Call to the Bar in England and Wales, prospective barristers are eligible for the next component of training, pupillage. This section provides information on progression onto pupillage following Bar training.¹⁰
53. The statistics presented have been calculated based upon the BSB’s record of student results and progression as of August 2024.
54. Those seeking to undertake pupillage in England and Wales are allowed up to five years following completion of the vocational part of an approved Bar training course in which they can gain pupillage – after this point, a waiver from the BSB would be needed. This makes comparing between years difficult - we would need to compare with relevant snapshots taken at set points in time to understand how students enrolled in recent years are progressing in comparison to those enrolled in years prior.
55. It is also the case that, along with all of the statistics presented in this report, there may be other variables more strongly linked to the outcomes seen which are not controlled for.
56. In cases where charts relate to students’ domicile, this refers to the region in which the student was domiciled prior to enrolment on Bar training.
57. Most of those domiciled in other countries prior to undertaking a vocational Bar training course do not appear to seek to gain pupillage in England and Wales following completion of the course. For this reason, ***most charts in this section relate to data on those domiciled in the UK prior to enrolment on a Bar training course only.***

¹⁰ In addition to this section of the report, some useful information on pupillage can be found on the BSB website at <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/becoming-a-barrister/pupillage-component.html>.

We have also published two research reports focusing on pupillage – one is on pupillage selection criteria, and can be found [here](#), and one in differential outcomes in gaining pupillage, which can be found [here](#).

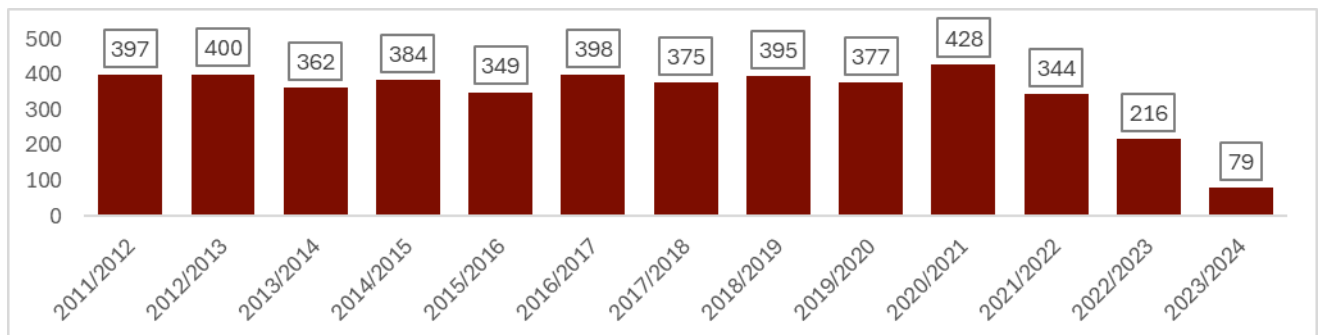
The Bar Council also provides some useful information on pupillage on their website at <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/becoming-a-barrister/pupil-barristers.html>, as well as a yearly report which presents lots of useful statistics on applications received through the Pupillage Gateway platform. The latest version of this at the time of writing can be found here - <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/resource/pupillage-gateway-report-2024.html>

58. Some years of enrolment on the BPTC have been grouped together in order to make it easier to display trends over a greater period of time. Statistics are only presented where there are 20 or more students in a group.

Progression onto pupillage – of entire cohort

59. Chart 22 below shows the total number of Bar training graduates who have gone on to gain pupillage in England and Wales. For the earlier cohorts shown in Chart 22, the number who obtained pupillage may be higher than the numbers shown, as accurate numbers for this are dependent on student records being linked to those of practising barristers in the BSB database, and this was formerly not as reliable a process as it is currently.

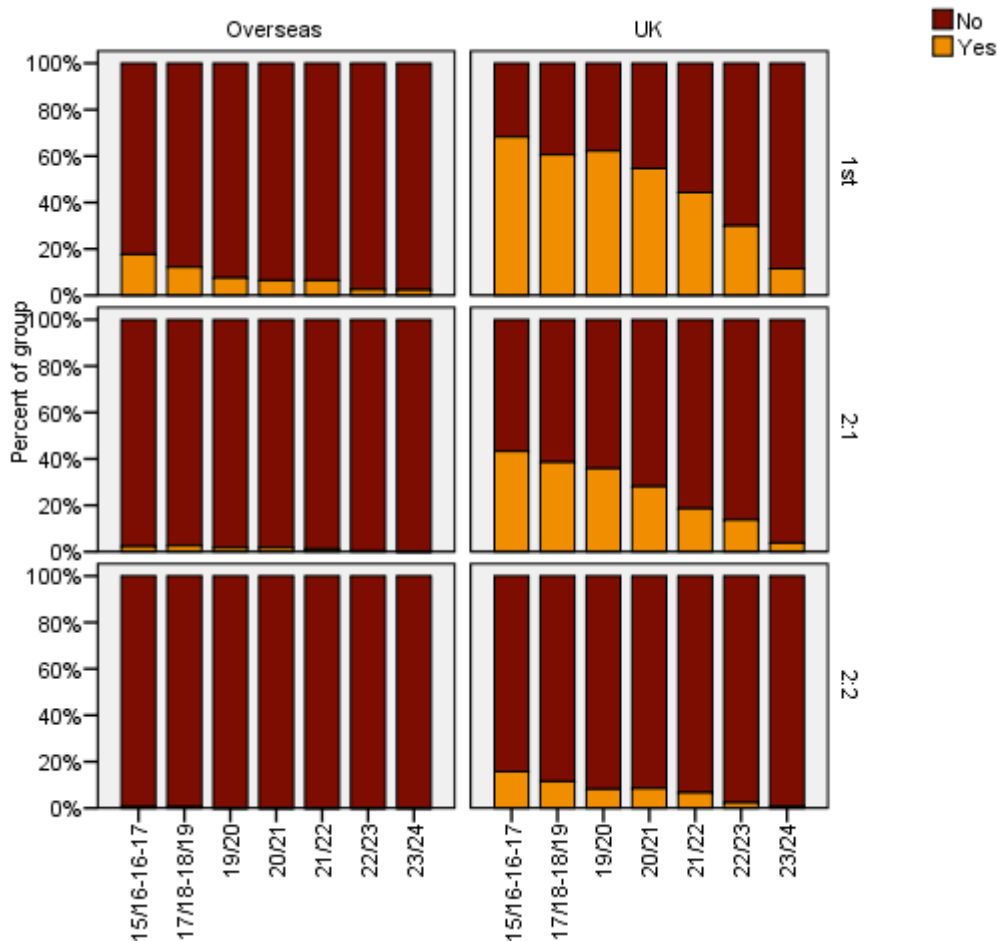
Chart 22. Total number of Bar training graduates that have gone on to gain pupillage by academic year of enrolment – 2011/12-2021/22



60. There is a clear relationship between the number of students gaining pupillage and years since enrolment. As graduates have five years in which to gain pupillage following completion of the course, this is understandable, and we would expect fewer people in the most recent cohorts to have gained pupillage – this pattern has been the case for as long as we have had a record of Bar training results, as evidenced by Part 4 of the previous BPTC Key Statistics Reports.¹¹
61. The chart below shows the proportion of an entire cohort (including those that have not passed the course) who have gone on to gain pupillage by domicile and first-degree classification.

¹¹ Can be accessed via <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/news-publications/research-and-statistics/bsb-research-reports/regular-research-publications.html>

Chart 23. Progression of entire cohort onto pupillage – By degree class and domicile



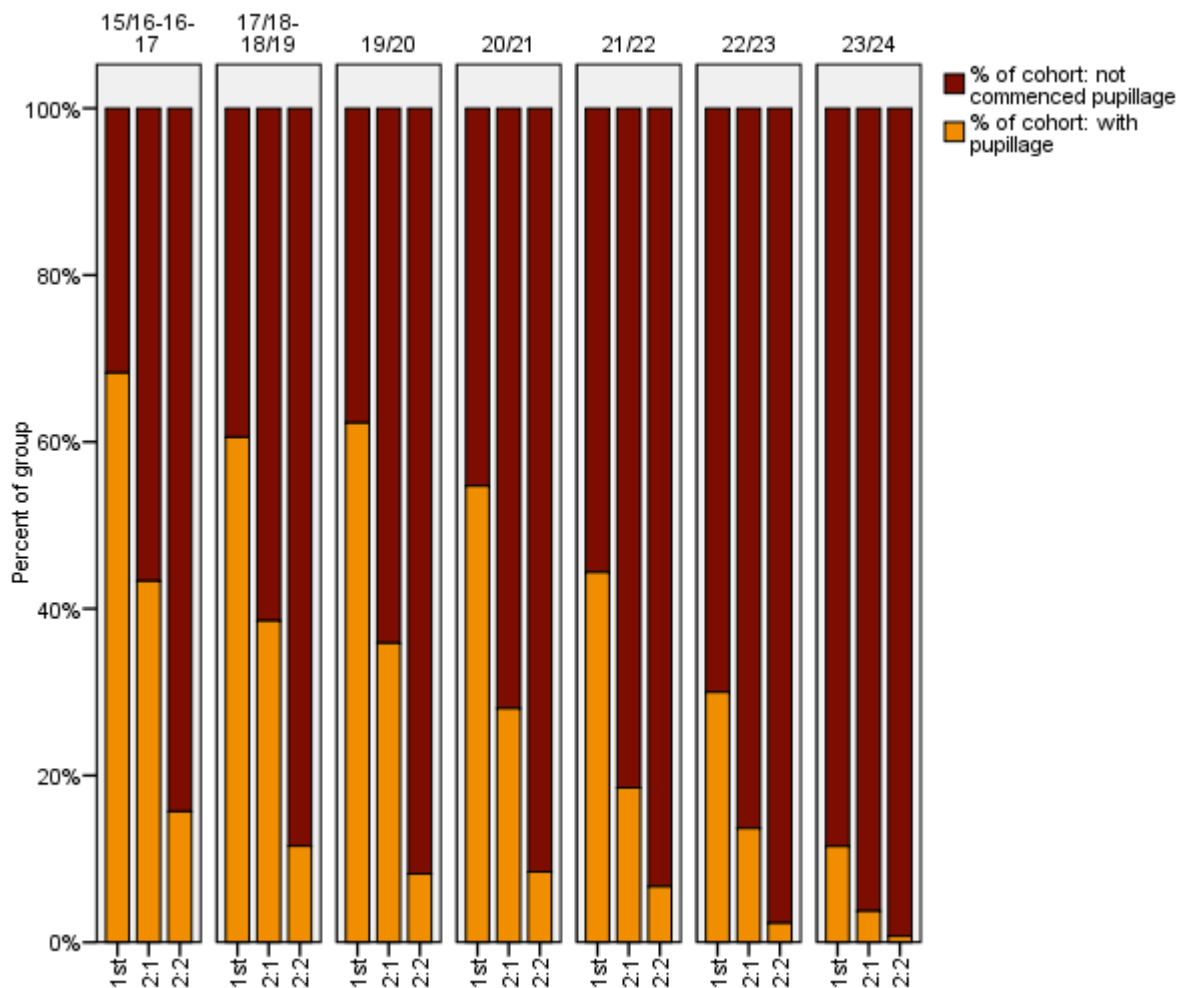
62. The majority of overseas domiciled students do not go on to pupillage in England and Wales. In the past, there has been evidence that a relatively low proportion of applicants for pupillage in England and Wales have a non-UK nationality,¹² and that only around 16 per cent of overseas domiciled students surveyed on the BPTC had practising at the Bar in England and Wales as their main motivation for studying the course¹³. Altogether, this would suggest that most of those domiciled overseas prior to enrolment will seek a legal career outside of this jurisdiction.

¹² See General Council of the Bar (2012). A comparison between the backgrounds of Pupillage Portal applicants in 2009 and registered pupils in 2011 – page 9 – found [here](#).

¹³ Calculated from BPTC perceptions survey undertaken by the BSB for 2013-14.

63. Chart 24 below shows the proportion of UK domiciled students (also covering the entire cohort, including those who have not passed the course) who have gone on to gain pupillage versus those who have not commenced pupillage. There is a clear trend which displays the correlation between first-degree classifications obtained and student progression.
64. Of all UK domiciled students, when controlling for degree class only, it is only those with a first-class degree for whom a majority in a cohort would be expected to go on to pupillage.

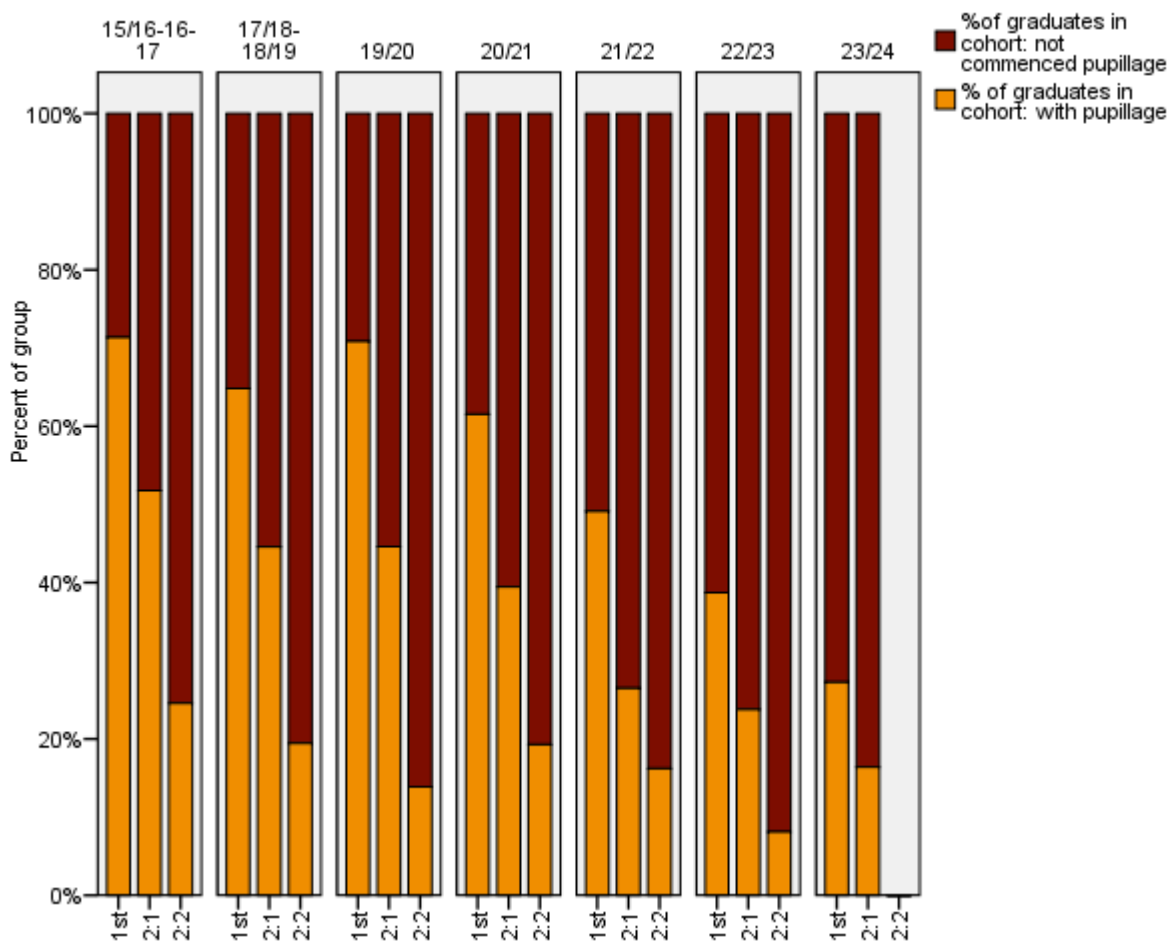
Chart 24. Progression of entire cohort of UK domiciled students onto pupillage



Progression onto pupillage - course graduates only

65. The charts in this section present statistics on **UK domiciled Bar training graduates** (those that have passed vocational Bar training) by pupillage status as of August 2024. Chart 25 below displays statistics on pupillage status of UK domiciled Bar training graduates by first degree classification.

Chart 25. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage

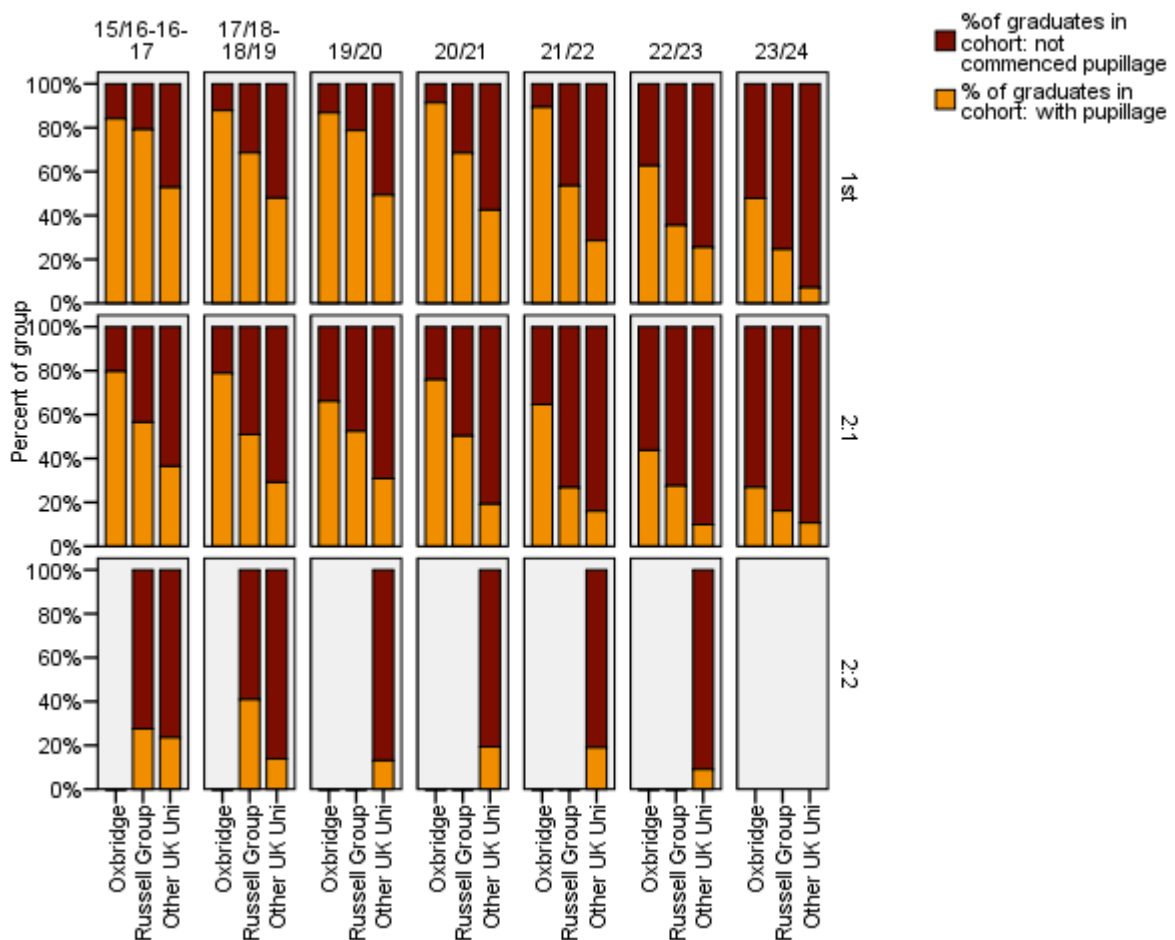


66. Overall, the UK students who passed their first degree with a first-class classification and who passed the Bar training course go on to gain pupillage in the greatest proportions. Students have five years from passing the vocational stage of Bar training to gain pupillage. Looking at the 2019/2020 cohort, more than 70 per cent of students have obtained pupillage within the timeframe. Those with a lower-second class degree do not gain pupillage in such proportions, with under 15 per cent of UK domiciled course graduates with this degree class from the 2019/20 cohort going onto pupillage. It is likely that some of the difference in the proportion of a cohort gaining pupillage by degree class is also due to differences seen in results on vocational training over the period of the BPTC, which do co-vary alongside first-degree classification.

67. Part 4 of the historical BPTC key statistics report monitored the relationship between grades awarded on the BPTC and the proportion gaining pupillage.¹⁴ Understandably, there was a clear link between the two. The lack of standardisation in grades awarded across vocational training providers makes this harder to monitor for the current Bar Training courses than on the BPTC, however.

University attended

Chart 26. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class and university attended for undergraduate degree



68. Chart 26 above shows the proportion of UK domiciled Bar training graduates that have gained pupillage by year of enrolment, degree classification and university attended for their first degree.

¹⁴ These can be found at <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/news-publications/research-and-statistics/bsb-research-reports/regular-research-publications.html>

69. The data shows those who attended Oxbridge gain pupillage in greater proportions than those who attended another Russell Group university, who in turn gain pupillage in greater proportions than those attending other UK universities - some part of this trend may be due to results on the Bar training course correlating with degree institution, but it is unlikely that all of it can be explained by this given results from previous research into the area in 2017¹⁵, and the statistics presented in Part 4 of the BPTC Key Statistics Reports, which did control for BPTC grade.¹⁶

Age

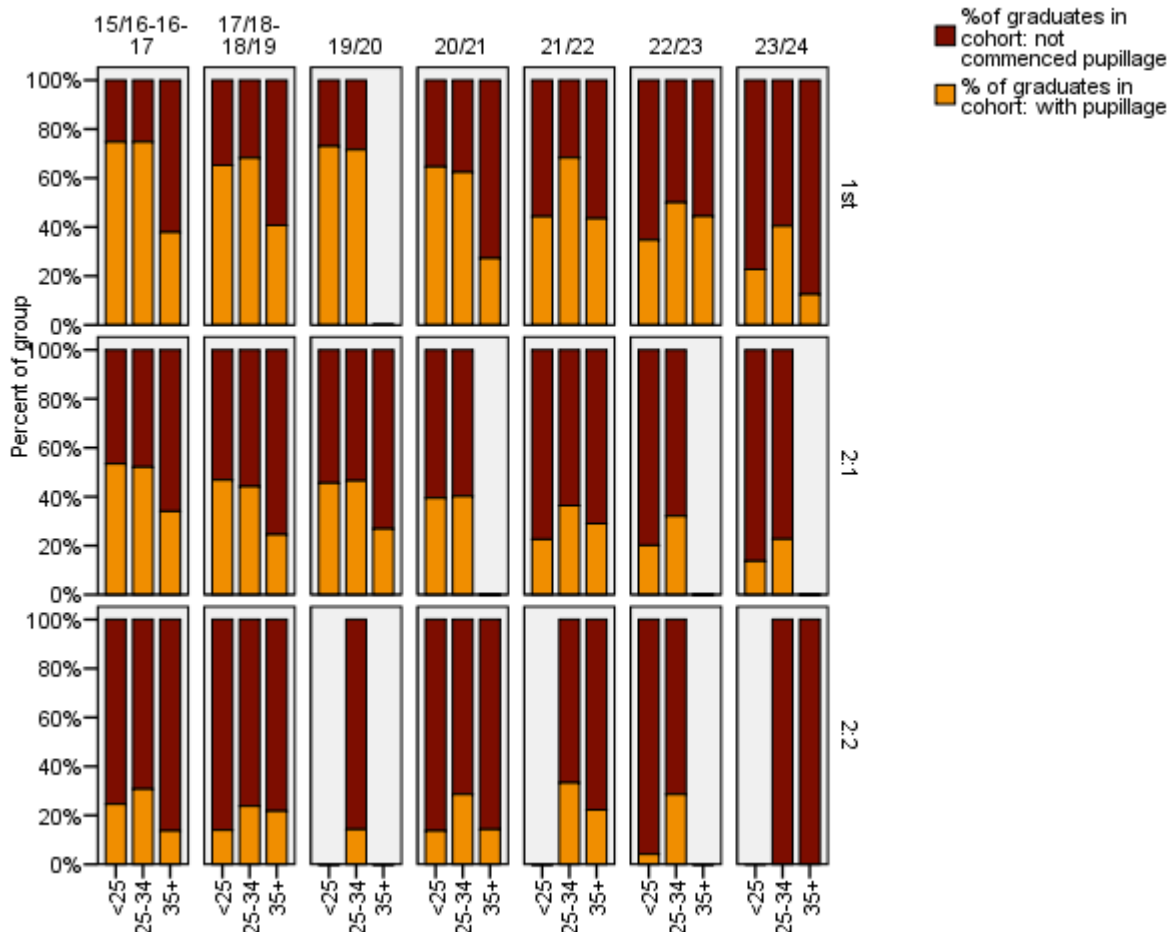
70. Chart 27 below shows the progression of UK domiciled Bar training graduates onto pupillage by age range upon enrolment. Data are only presented where there are 20 or more in a group, which means that in some cases, those age 35+ are not included due to low numbers of students in this age range.

¹⁵ University attended was found to be a strong predictor of the likelihood of gaining pupillage in this research - Bar Standards Board (2017). Exploring differential attainment at BPTC and Pupillage. Can be found [here](#)

¹⁶ See Chart 4.A.10 of the 2021 BPTC Key Statistics Report for reference.

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

Chart 27. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class and age range.



- 71. When controlling for degree class, similar proportions of those aged under 25 and those aged 25-34 go on to gain pupillage after passing Bar training. It appears that a lower proportion of those aged 35+ go on to gain pupillage when controlling for degree class, there also seems to be a relationship with the mode of study with four in ten UK domiciled students aged 36+ enrolled from 2011/12-2022/23, enrolled on the course on a part-time basis, compared to around 27 percent of those aged 26-35, and 11 percent of those aged 18 -25.
- 72. The trends seen above could also generally be said to be present when degree institution is controlled for. This is shown in Chart A2 in the appendices.

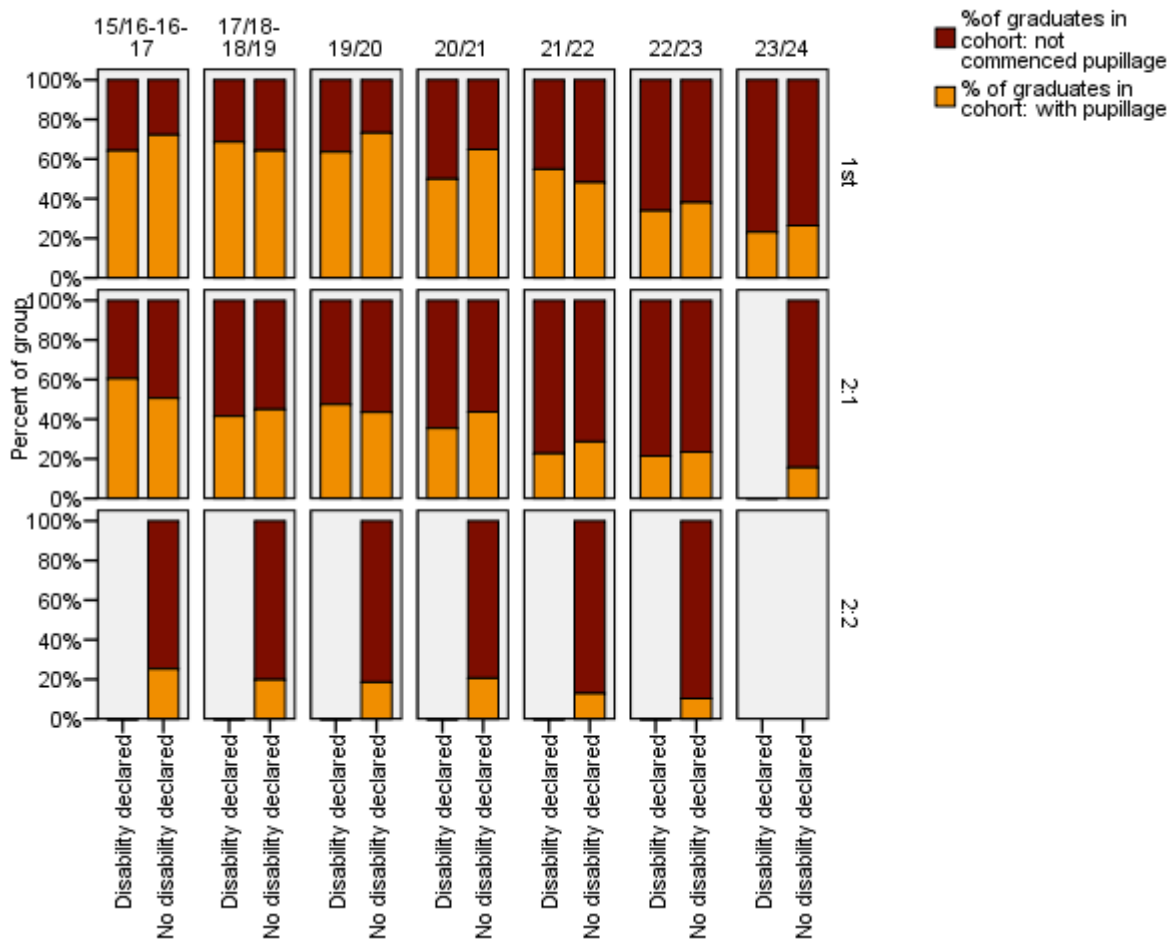
Disability

- 73. Chart 28 below shows the progression of UK domiciled Bar training graduates onto pupillage by disability status (as defined under the Equality Act 2010). Data are only presented where there are 20 or more in a group (there were not enough students who had a declared disability with a 2:2 degree to provide a valid comparative group).

Part 1 – Public

74. Overall, no clear trend emerges from the data. In some instances, those with a declared disability have gained pupillage in greater proportions for those with a specific degree class, and in some instances, the opposite is seen. No clear trends emerge either for the relationship between disability status and the proportion of UK domiciled Bar training graduates gaining pupillage when degree institution is controlled for. This is shown in Chart A3 in the appendices.

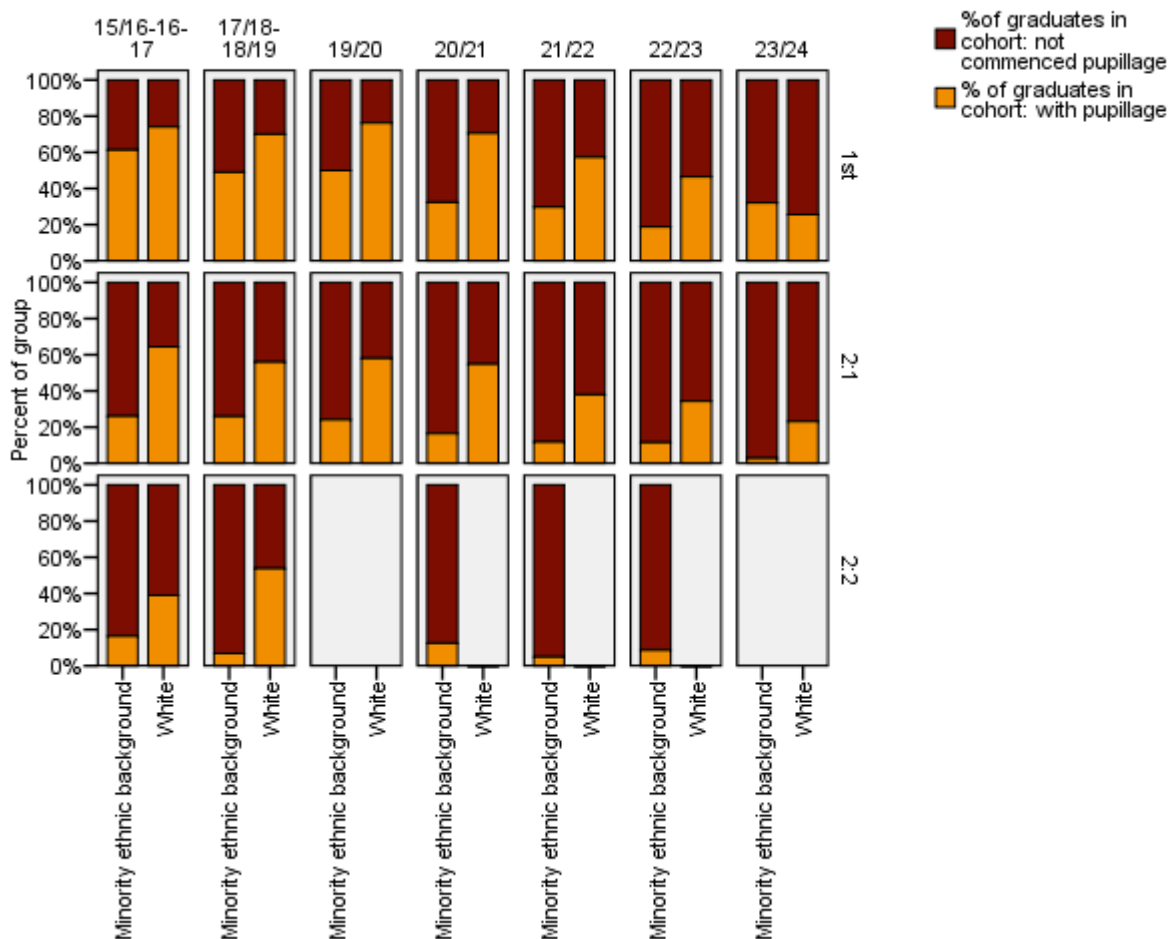
Chart 28. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class and disability status



Ethnicity

- 75. Chart 29 below shows the progression of UK domiciled Bar training graduates onto pupillage by ethnic background. Data are only presented where there are 20 or more in a group.
- 76. Overall, UK domiciled Bar training graduates from White ethnic backgrounds appear to gain pupillage in greater proportions than UK domiciled Bar training graduates from minoritised ethnic backgrounds when disaggregating by degree classification.

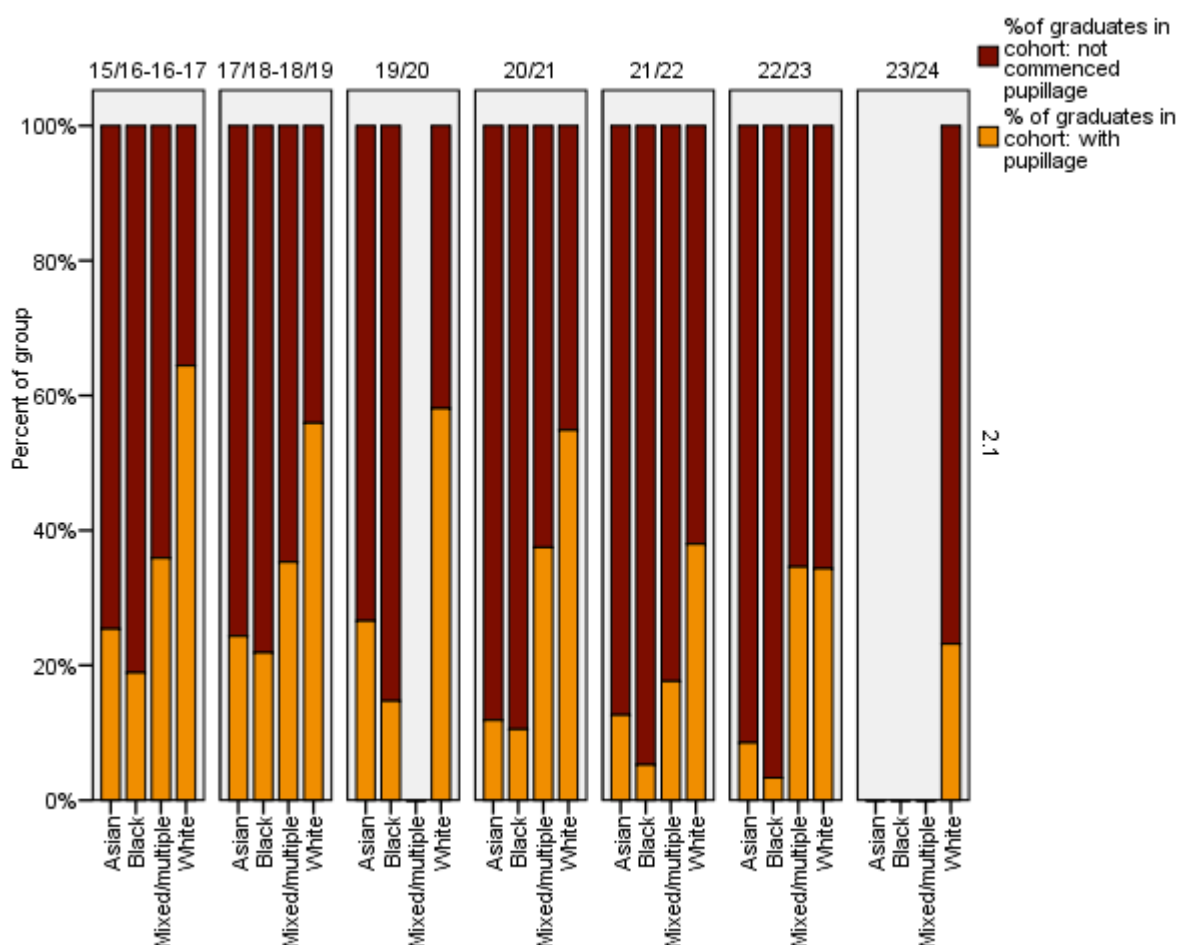
Chart 29. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class and ethnic background



- 77. Chart 30 below shows the progression of UK domiciled Bar training graduates onto pupillage by degree class and ethnicity, for more disaggregated ethnic groups. The only degree class presented is those with a 2:1, as this was the only degree class with 20 or more students in most groupings. The biggest differences seen are between Asian/Asian British and White Bar training

graduates, and between Black/Black British and White Bar training graduates. This has previously been documented by the BSB, including in research published in 2017¹⁷, and in previous BPTC Key Statistics Reports.¹⁸ The differences seen on the BPTC remained present when controlling for BPTC grade and university attended.¹⁹

Chart 30. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class and more disaggregated ethnic background – those with a 2:1 degree only



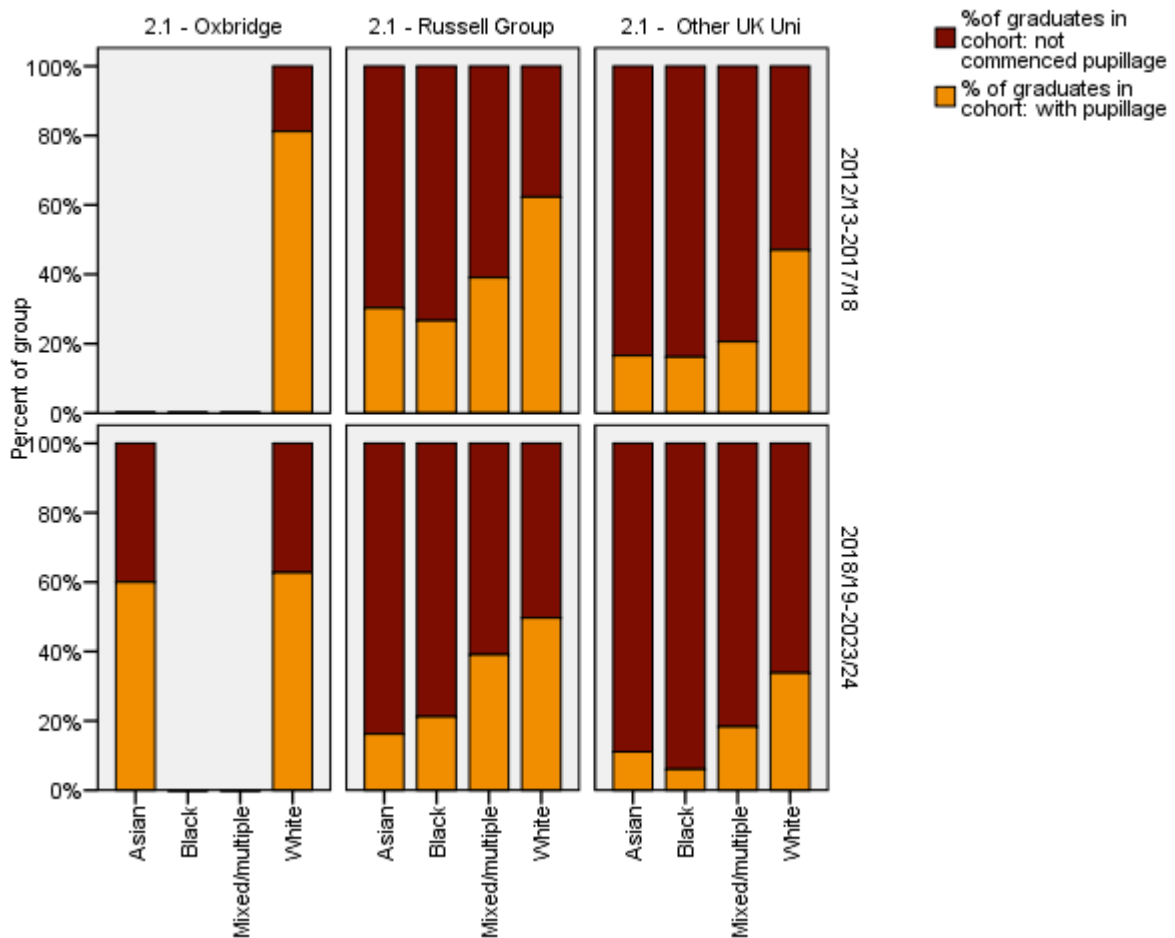
¹⁷ Bar Standards Board (2017). Exploring differential attainment at BPTC and Pupillage. Can be found [here](#)

¹⁸ These can be found here: <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/news-publications/research-and-statistics/bsb-research-reports/regular-research-publications.html>

¹⁹ As highlighted in chart 4.A.7.2 in the most recent report, found [here](#)

78. Chart 31 below shows the progression of UK domiciled graduates onto pupillage by ethnicity when controlling for degree institution for those with a 2:1 degree (the only degree for which there more than 20 or more students). Differences in the percentage gaining pupillage by ethnic group are still present when controlling for degree institution attended.

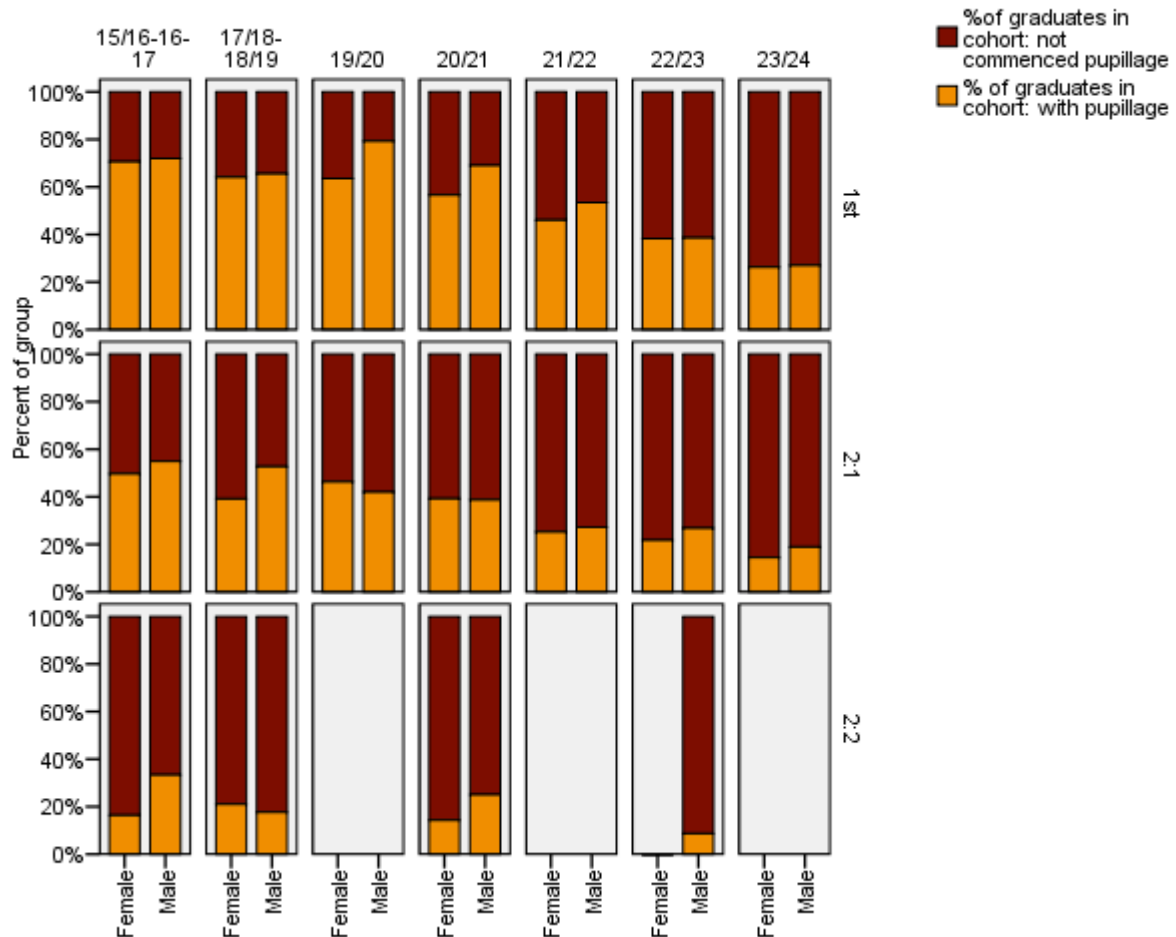
Chart 31. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class, ethnic background and first-degree institution



Gender

79. Chart 32 below shows the progression of UK domiciled Bar training graduates onto pupillage by gender. Data are only presented where there are 20 or more in a group.

Chart 32. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class and gender.



80. The proportion of male and female UK domiciled Bar training graduates who have gained pupillage is similar across many degree classes and year of enrolment groupings. Historically, there was a trend of males with a first-class degree gaining pupillage in greater proportions than females with the same degree class. When controlling for degree institution attended, differences in the proportion of female and male UK domiciled Bar training graduates who have gained pupillage are even smaller than that seen above. This can be seen in Chart A4 in the appendices.
81. Since 2015/16 academic year we have a record of around more than 6,500 females and 5,000 males passing Bar training. We also have a record of 2374 females registering for pupillage, and 2096 males. So, the total number of female pupils does outnumber that of males, but not to the same extent as may be expected based upon the extent to which female Bar training graduates outnumber male Bar training graduates.

Appendices

Chart A1. Results on Bar training by degree class and ethnicity (% of cohort) – UK domiciled students with a 2:1 degree only

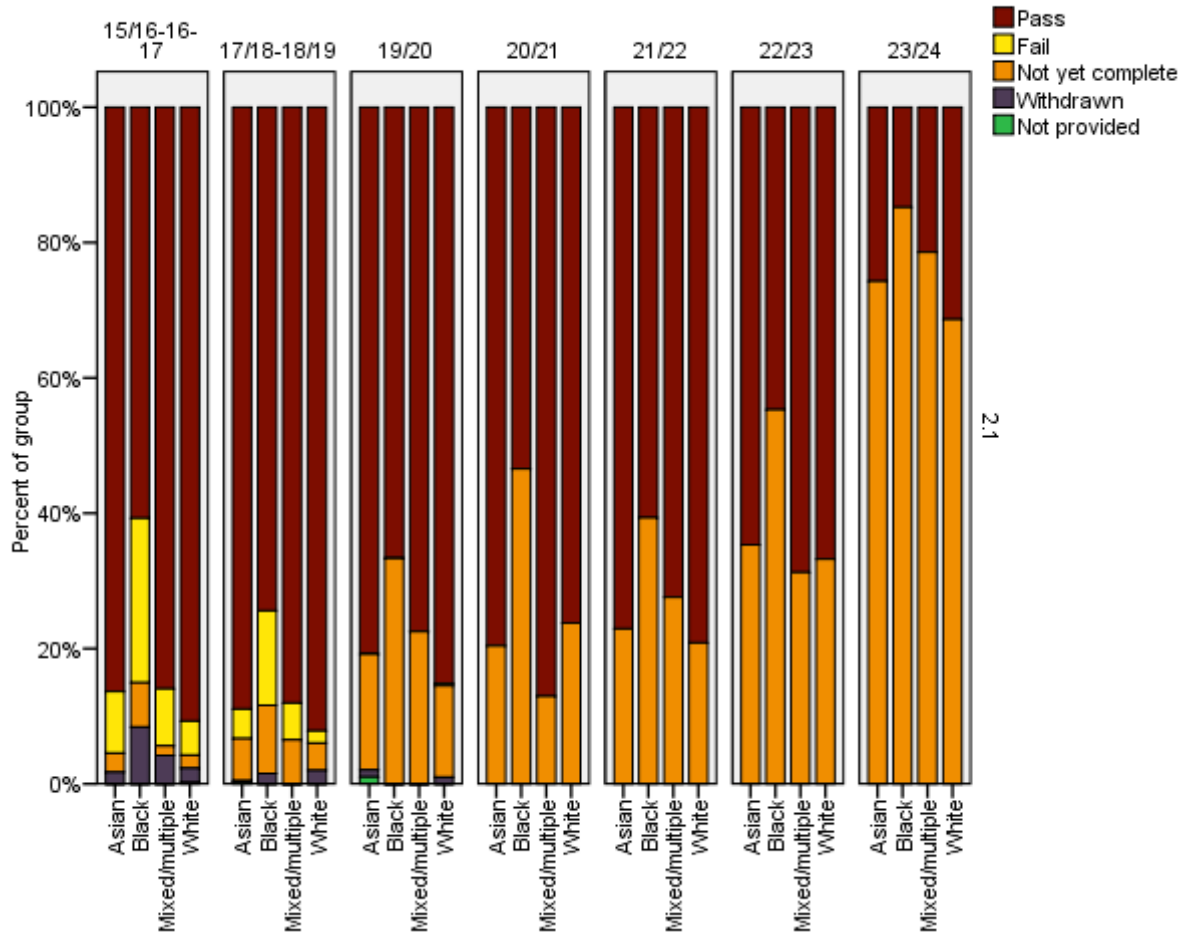


Chart A2. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class, age range and first-degree institution

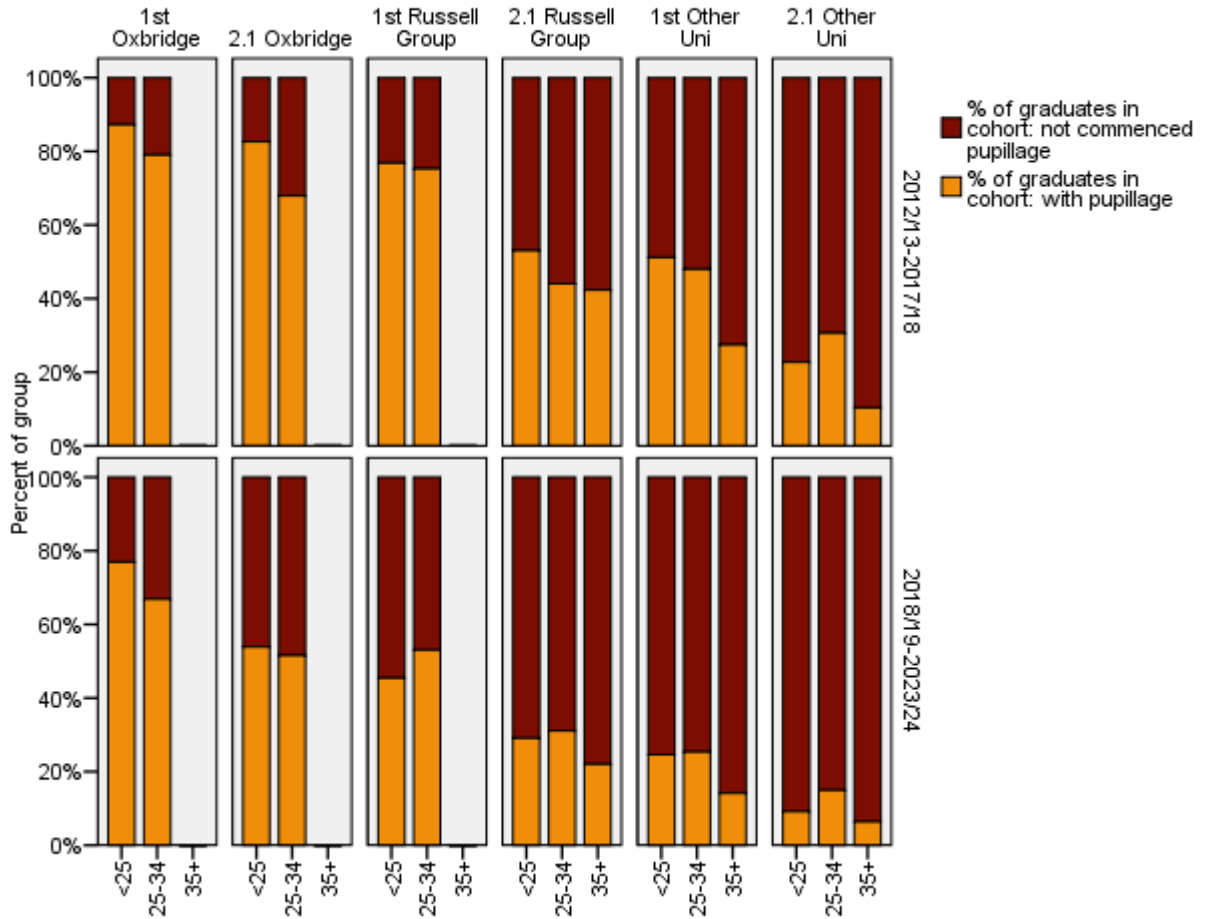


Chart A3. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class, disability status and first degree institution

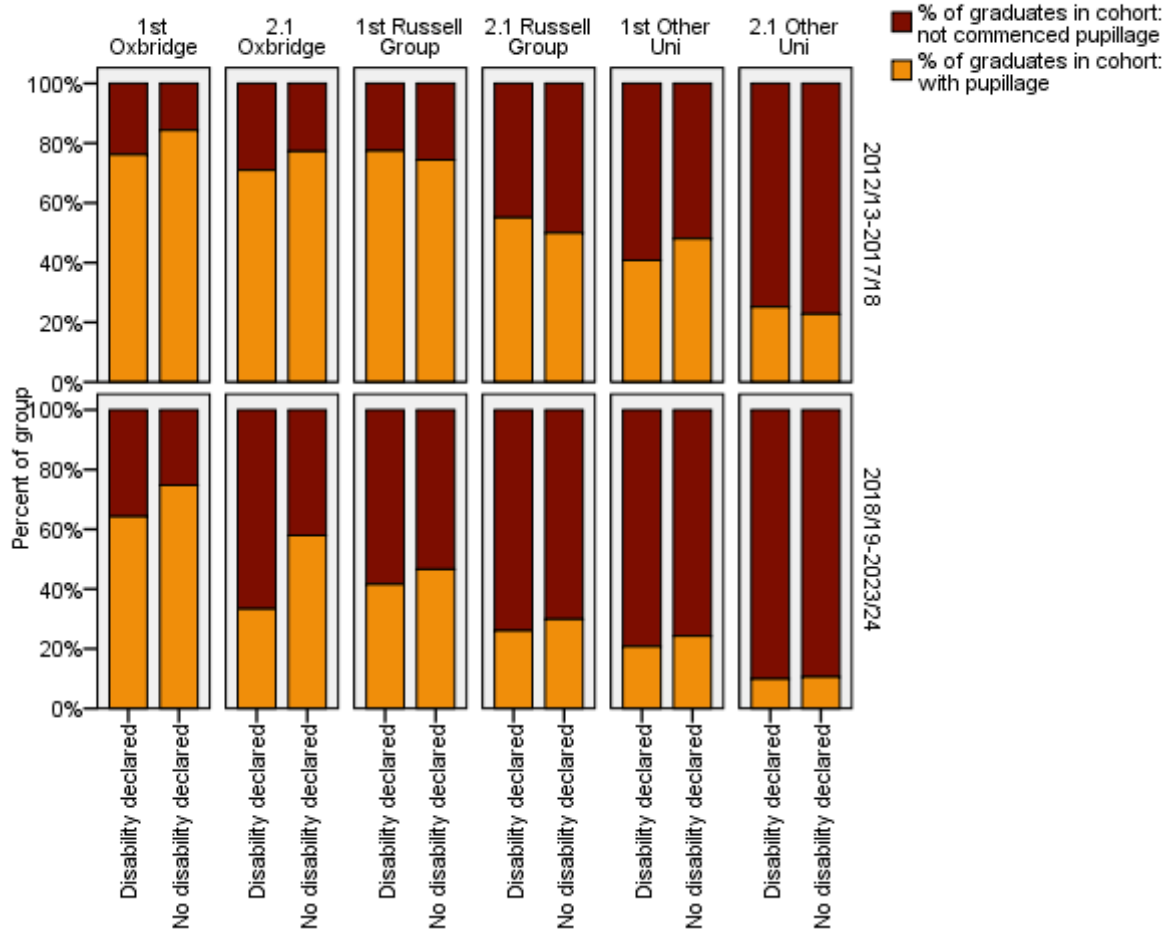
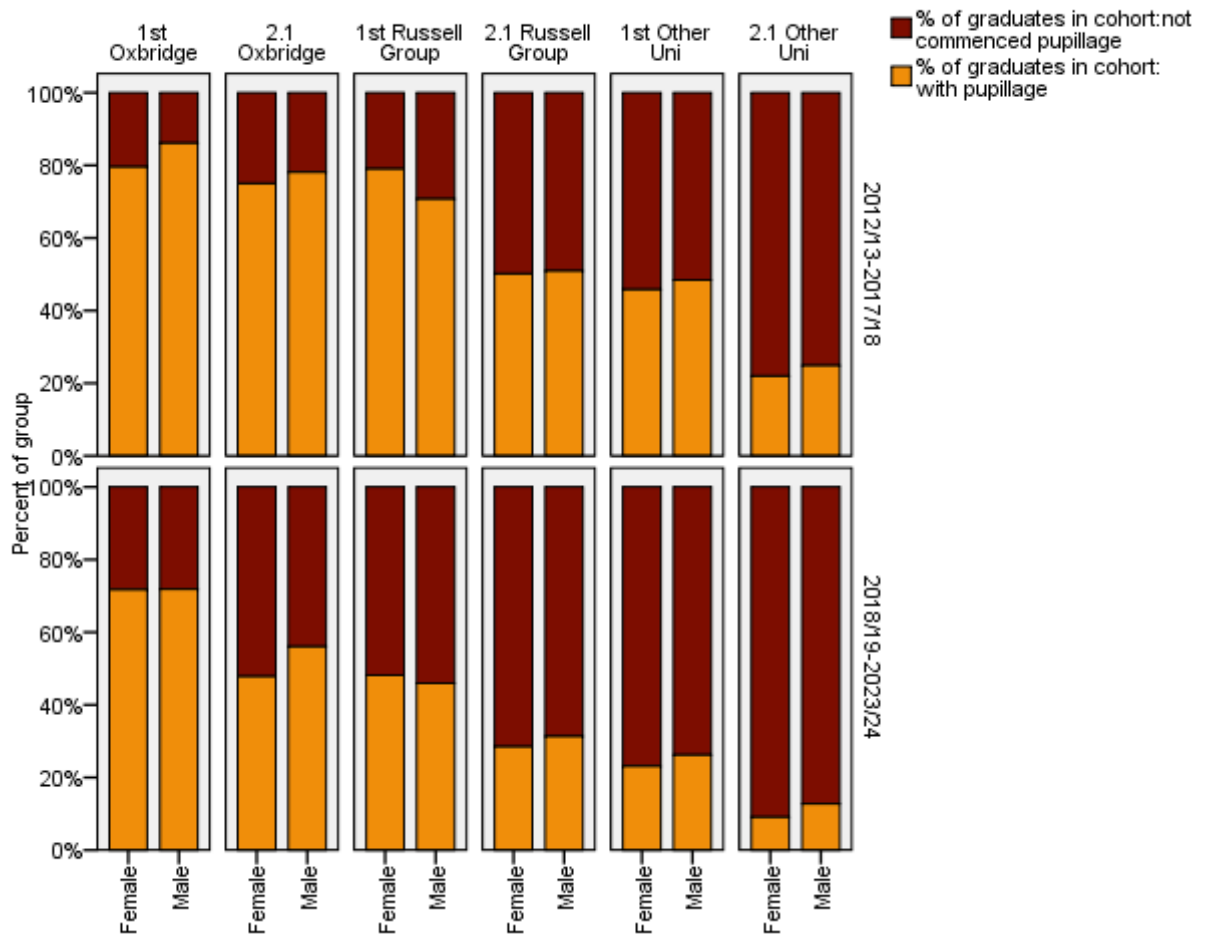


Chart A4. Progression of UK domiciled course graduates onto pupillage – by degree class, gender and first-degree institution



Bar Standards Board – Director General’s Update – 30 January 2025

For publication

Immigration Advice Authority

1. I attended the launch event on 16 January of the Immigration Advice Authority which replaces the former Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. The keynote speaker was the Minister for Migration and Citizenship, Seema Malhotra MP. The aim of the Authority is to improve the quality of immigration advice and to root out unregulated advisers.
2. In the course of an open discussion, I made two points about collaboration between the front-line legal regulators.
3. The first centred on the need for public education to ensure those seeking immigration advice, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances, could find their way to good quality, regulated advisers. In my view, such advice is better provided through trusted third sector organisations rather than through centrally run websites. I hope, therefore, that, as the Bar Standards Board takes over the Chair of the *Legal Choices Board*, we and other partners can develop a broader public legal education strategy which directs at least some resource to these intermediary organisations.
4. Second, I noted the need for good intelligence-sharing between the front-line legal services regulators to identify any regulated professionals providing poor quality advice or undermining the integrity of the immigration system.

Re-organisation

5. The re-organisation of accountabilities at the Bar Standards Board came into effect on 2 December 2024. The result is to clarify and focus accountabilities in support of our Reform programme. We have now successfully recruited to fill the two remaining vacant Director roles. Both successful candidates have extensive relevant experience for the roles.

Disability

6. I spoke at the launch of the Middle Temple Disability Forum on 6 December. The Forum is a very welcome and important development, but the addresses from disabled barristers and from the audience underlined that there is more to do to ensure inclusion for pupils, barristers and clients with disabilities.

Mark Neale

Director General

Chair’s Report on Visits and External Meetings from end November 2024**Status:**

1. For noting

Executive Summary:

2. In the interests of good governance, openness and transparency, this paper sets out the Chair’s visits and meetings since the last Board meeting.

List of Visits and Meetings:**Meetings**

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 13 January 2025 | Met with AMKC for appraisal |
| 28 January | Attended Board briefing meeting |
| | Attended Joint Finance meeting with Mark Neale |
| 29 January | Attended GRA Committee |
| 30 January | Attended Board seminar and Board meeting |

1-2-1 Meetings

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 14 January 2025 | Introductory meeting with Debbie Stimpson, Interim Director of Planning, Programmes and Engagement and Introductory meeting with Graham Black, Interim Head of Communications |
|-----------------|---|

Events

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 8 January 2025 | Lunch with new Board Member (Lay) Ruth Pickering with Mark Neale |
| | Attended Inaugural Address of Barbara Mills KC, Chair of BC |
| 9 January | Lunch with new Board Member (Lay) Tracey Markham with Mark Neale |
| 23 January | Lunch with new Board Member (Barrister) Ruby Hamid with Mark Neale |
| 29 January | Attended the People Conference |
| 30 January | Attended Reception at Middle Temple |

BSB Recruitment

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 6 January 2025 | Shortlisting for Director of Planning, Programmes and Engagement |
| 8 January | Shortlisting for Director of Legal |
| 13 January | Panel member for interviews for Director of Legal |
| 14 January | Panel member for interviews for Director of Planning, Programmes and Engagement |