

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



Meeting of the Bar Standards Board

Thursday 25 July 2024, 4.00 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 Assuring Standards

			Page
1.	Welcome / announcements (4.00 pm)	Chair	
2.	Apologies	Chair	
3.	Members' interests and hospitality	Chair	
4.	Approval of minutes from the last meeting (23 May 2024)	Annex A Chair	3-7
5.	a) Matters arising & Action List	Annex B Chair	9-10
	b) Forward agenda	Annex C Chair	11
6.	Recommendations on changes to Authorisations process – Phase 1 (4.10 pm)	BSB 035 (24) Prof Mike Molan Victoria Stec	13-37
7.	Annual Report 2023-24 (4.40 pm)	BSB 036 (24) Wilf White	39-74
8.	Director General's Report – Public Session (4.50 pm)	BSB 037 (24) Mark Neale	75
9.	Chair's Report on Visits & External Meetings	BSB 038 (24) Chair	77-78
10.	Any other business		
11.	Date of next meeting Thursday 26 September 2024, 2 pm		
12.	Private Session (5.00 pm)		

John Picken
Governance Officer
18 July 2024

BAR STANDARDS BOARD

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Part 1 - Public**Minutes of the Bar Standards Board meeting****Thursday 23 May 2024 (2.00 pm)****Hybrid Meeting, Rooms 1.4-1.7, BSB Offices & MS Teams**

- Present:** Kathryn Stone OBE (Chair)
Gisela Abbam
Alison Allden OBE
Jeff Chapman KC
Steve Haines
Simon Lewis
Andrew Mitchell KC
Stephen Thornton CBE
- By invitation:** Malcolm Cree CBE (Chief Executive, Bar Council) – via Teams
Claire Jasper, Head of Culture, Engagement and Talent, Quilter
Lorinda Long, Treasurer, Bar Council
- Press:** Neil Rose, Legal Futures – via Teams
- BSB Executive** Georgia Bozekova (Senior People Manager)
Laura Cassidy (Stakeholder Engagement Officer) – via Teams
Christopher Fitzsimons (Communications Manager) – via Teams
Rebecca Forbes (Head of Governance & Corporate Services)
Neve Goodbun (Assessment Officer, Contact & Assessment Team)
Teresa Haskins (Director of People, BSB) – via Teams
Saima Hirji (Acting Director of Regulatory Operations) *Note: Saima Hirji attended for Part 1 of the meeting only*
Sara Jagger (Director of Legal and Enforcement) – via Teams
Ewen Macleod (Director of Strategy & Policy)
Rupika Madhura (Interim Director of Standards)
Mark Neale (Director General)
John Picken (Governance Officer)
Wilf White (Director of Communications & Public Engagement)

Item 1 – Welcome / Announcements**Action**

1. Kathryn Stone welcomed those present, in particular Neve Goodbun and Claire Jasper who were attending the Board for the first time. *Note: Claire Jasper attended at the invitation of Rupika Madhura as both were paired as “learning partners” for the Senior Leaders Fellowship Programme run by the [Forward Institute](#).*
2. **Item 2 – Apologies**
 - Irena Sabic KC;
 - Professor Leslie Thomas KC;
 - Sam Townend KC (Chair, Bar Council);
 - James Wakefield KC (Hon) (Director, Council of the Inns of Court);*Note: Emir Feisal JP was not present for Part 1 of the meeting but did attend during Part 2.*

Item 3 – Members’ interests and hospitality

3. None.

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

4. The Board **approved** the Part 1 (public) minutes of the meetings held on 21 March 2024 and 11 April 2024.

Item 5a – Matters arising & Action List

5. There were no matters arising.

Item 5b – Forward agenda

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

Item 6 – Performance Report: Quarter 4 (2023/24)

BSB 027 (24)

7. Mark Neale commented as follows:
- from a “year-end” perspective, the BSB has seen:
 - an increased volume of work, especially in Authorisations (+25%);
 - productivity improvements in the Contact and Assessment Team (+12% increase in throughput of reports about barristers);
 - in respect of Quarter 4, the salient points were:
 - a significant overall bounce back in productivity compared to Q3;
 - improvements in timeliness for the completion of investigations;
 - challenges remain for Authorisations where new caseloads continue to outpace closure rates, although our internal “Task Force” on applications from transferring qualified lawyers (TQLs) is now in place;
 - a qualified lawyer has also been added to the Authorisations Team to assist with decision making.
8. Mark Neale also referenced recent suggestions from the Performance and Strategic Planning (PSP) Committee about TQL applications ie:
- (i) prepare a sample survey of the motivating factors behind applications of those using the TQL route to qualification, but who are not seeking to practice at the England and Wales Bar;
 - (ii) consider providing one or more anonymised case study/ies about the TQL route to illustrate the complexity, cost and outcome of these applications.
9. Though grateful for these ideas, the Team considered it already has good anecdotal evidence of the motives behind this group of TQL applicants. Also, case studies would require significant redaction and might be too idiosyncratic for general illustrative purposes. The Chair did, however, agree a suggestion from the executive about a pre-Board seminar on TQL applications so that Members better understand this process.
10. In response to questions raised, Mark Neale stated that:
- the fee for TQL applications has already been raised to take account of inflation since the last time this was set;
 - the application form has also been revised to maximise the administrative efficiency in terms of processing time although we have yet to see solid evidence of the resulting efficiency gain

11. The Board commented as follows:

- there continues to be a deleterious impact on operational work from these additional TQL applications. One recent example was a barrister whose pupillage was put in jeopardy because of delay to the authorisation process;
- it is not apparent why our rules cannot be altered to disallow those who have no intention of practising at the Bar in England and Wales;
- we should identify how long it would take to make such a rule change;
- the operational administration of TQL rules is within the BSB's own jurisdiction, and we should manage expectations accordingly. Whilst we might still accept new TQL applications from those not seeking to practise at the England and Wales Bar, we could also give notice that these will not be processed until priority casework has been cleared;
- the influx of TQL applications from those not intending to practise in England and Wales skews our data on key performance indicators (KPIs). This group should be treated separately for KPI purposes so that we can properly focus on priority casework for Authorisations;
- at the private session of its March meeting, the Board argued for an uplift the TQL application fee by an amount that would be approximate to (though not breach) the likely full economic cost. The decision to only raise this by inflation falls short of this figure.

12. In response, the executive commented as follows:

- our current rules do *not* require applicants to provide evidence of an intent to practise at the Bar in England and Wales. Phase 2 of our planned review of Authorisations will give an opportunity to reconsider the rules, but there is no "quick fix";
- any change requires approval from the Legal Services Board and includes an equality impact assessment (EIA) and a 12-week public consultation period. Moreover, were applicants required to demonstrate intention to practise at the England and Wales Bar, we would also need to provide appropriate guidance;
- the time required to implement a rule change needs to be verified but a likely estimate would be about a year;
- we would need to review the extent to which our existing rules could be varied. We receive applications from lawyers who *are* seeking to practice at the Bar in England and Wales as well as those who are not so need to reliably and consistently distinguish between the two;
- there are several sources for TQL applications eg solicitors transferring to the Bar and those from lawyers from other jurisdictions. To date, our KPIs for authorisations have been used on the same basis regardless of the category, for reasons of consistency;
- until we have a critical mass of applications based on the revised form (cf. min 10) we will not be able to arrive at an accurate figure for full cost recovery. At present we are still working through old style forms, but we should be in a better position by September 2024.

13. In summarising the discussion, the Chair asked the executive to consider further the points raised by the Board and provide an update at the July meeting. In particular she highlighted the ideas around:
- an interim uplift in fees and revised / separate KPIs;
 - a more radical approach for prioritisation of TQL applications from those practising, or actively intending to practise, at the Bar in England and Wales.
14. Stephen Thornton referred to paragraph 12 about *Legal Choices* and welcomed the news that frontline regulators had now agreed to include third sector organisations in their strategy for public legal education. Wilf White added that BSB's decision to rejoin *Legal Choices* had been well received as had interest in the collaborative work it previously championed.
15. Steve Haines also asked that the Board Away Day includes the headline results of the study on intermediary businesses and associated regulatory risks on access to barrister services (paragraph 12 of the report refers). The executive agreed to this request.
16. **AGREED**
- a) to welcome and celebrate the general improvement in performance as set out in Annex A of the paper.
 - b) that the executive organise a pre-Board seminar on the administrative process for qualified lawyers seeking to transfer to the Bar for England and Wales. SH
 - c) that the executive urgently reconsiders 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) and provides an update at the July Board meeting. MN
 - d) that the Board Away Day (27 June 2024) includes headline results on the market study on intermediaries (cf. min 15). EM

Item 7 – Performance and Strategic Planning Committee (PSP) Year End Report (November 2023 – March 2024)

BSB 028 (24)

17. The Board **noted** the report and the recent extension of the PSP Committee's remit to include oversight of change programmes.

Item 8 – Committee Terms of Reference, Appointments policy and governance policies

BSB 029 (24)

18. The Board approved the recommendations set out in the report without further comment. Both the Chair and Vice Chair thanked Rebecca Forbes for the care and attention given to this paper and acknowledged the importance of having effective governance arrangements in place.
19. **AGREED**
to approve:
- a) the revised Terms of Reference for (i) the Nomination Committee and (ii) the Performance and Strategic Planning Committee. RF
 - b) the generic change for all Committee Terms of Reference giving all Board Members the right to observe Committee meetings and amending the process for appointment of Board Members to Committees. RF

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| c) the revision to the Board Appointments Policy. | RF |
| d) the revision to the Terms of Reference for the Centralised Examinations Board. | RF |
| e) the amendment to the Board's Code of Conduct. | RF |

Item 9 – Director General's Report – Public Session

BSB 030 (24)

20. The Board **noted** the report.

Item 10 – Chair's Report on Visits and External Meetings

BSB 031 (24)

21. The Board **noted** the report. The Chair reiterated the very useful and worthwhile nature of her various meetings with barristers, legal practice managers and Head of Chambers. She also welcomed the recent follow-up roundtable discussions with stakeholders.
22. Members noted the reference to “knowledge share sessions” with (i) Simon Lewis and (ii) Jeff Chapman KC. *Note: the executive confirmed that these were recorded so are accessible to the Board.*
23. The Chair expressed her sincere thanks to both Simon and Jeff for their involvement, as well as to other Board Members who have contributed similarly. She observed the value of providing opportunities for the executive to learn more about Board Members outside of formal meetings.

Item 11 – Any Other Business

24. None.

Item 12 – Dates of next meetings

25. • Thursday 27 June 2024, 9.30 am (Board Away Day).
• Thursday 25 July 2024, 5 pm.

Item 13 – Private Session

26. The Board resolved to consider the following items in private session:
- (1) Approval of Part 2 (private) minutes – 21 March 2024 & 11 April 2024.
 - (2) Matters arising and action points – Part 2.
 - (3) BSB Corporate Risk update for the Board – May 2024.
 - (4) Independence: incorporation of the Bar Standards Board.
 - (5) Director General's Report – Private Session.
 - (6) Any other private business.
27. The meeting finished at 2.45 pm.

BSB – List of Part 1 Actions

25 July 2024

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

Min ref	Action required	Person(s) responsible	Date of action required	Progress report	
				Date	Summary of update
16b (23/05/24)	arrange a date for a pre-Board seminar on the administrative process for qualified lawyers seeking to transfer to the Bar for England and Wales	Saima Hirji	before 18 July 2024	09/07/24	Completed – seminar took place on 9 July 2024
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 provides an update at the July Board meeting	Mark Neale	before 18 July 2024	16/07/24	In hand – recording of 9 July Board seminar is available to Members on request. Slides were circulated to Members on 10 July
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	16/07/24	Ongoing – the SLT commissioned some additional research on this, which is currently being undertaken before coming back to the Board
19a-e (23/05/24)	update Governance related documents as agreed at the May Board meeting	Rebecca Forbes	immediate	31/05/24	Completed – published on website
19b (11/04/24)	develop the steers from the Board's meeting on its enforcement review into formal proposals that also include relevant timelines and cost estimates	Mark Neale	before 18 July 2024	16/07/24	In hand – Update provided for discussion in private session
19c (11/04/24)	seek prior Board approval for any costs in excess of budget of the enforcement review	Mark Neale	before 18 July 2024	16/07/24	In hand – Update provided for discussion in private session
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	16/07/24	Action in hand – see the slides for the Board seminar on 9 July

BSB – List of Part 1 Actions
25 July 2024

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

Min ref	Action required	Person(s) responsible	Date of action required	Progress report	
				Date	Summary of update
16d (30/11/23)	consider expediting full cost recovery analysis of authorisation applications	Rebecca Forbes	25 January 2024 end July 2024	15/07/24	Action in hand – proposals on revised fees to be presented to PSP and Board in September
				15/05/24	Action in hand – see private session action log

Forward Agenda**Thursday 4 September 2024 – BSB / LSB Board to Board Meeting – 2.30 pm start****Thursday 26 September 2024 – 2 pm start**

- Q1 performance report
- Director General’s Report (public & private session)
- Outcome of consultation on our expectations of chambers
- Regulatory Decisions Annual Report 2023/24
- Independent Decision Making Body Annual Report 2023-24
- Statement of policy on empowering consumers
- Budget Proposal – 2025/26 financial year
- Consolidated Risk Report
- Draft strategy

Thursday 28 November 2024 – 5 pm start

- Mid year report from the PSP Committee
- GRA Annual Report
- Annual report – Bar Training
- Q2 performance report
- Director General’s Report (public & private session)
- Dates for Board Meetings (Jan 2025 – Mar 2026)
- Equality Rules
- Corporate Risk Report (summary)
- Draft return to LSB for its regulatory performance assessment of BSB and six monthly self-assessment against the LSB Regulatory Performance Framework
- Reform and re-organisation
- LSB empowering consumers BSB compliance update
- Board appointments

Thursday 30 January 2025 – 2 pm start

- Annual Diversity Data Report
- Director General’s Report (public & private session)
- Reform and re-organisation
- Annual “deep dive” on the corporate risk register

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
- Consolidated Risk Report
- Reform and re-organisation

Meeting:	BSB Board Meeting	Date:	25 July 2024
Title:	Phase One of the Authorisations Review Project: recommendations for change (post-consultation)		
Author:	Saima Hirji, interim Director of Regulatory Operations Professor Mike Molan, consultant		

Paper for:	Decision: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Noting: <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: <input type="checkbox"/> (enter text)
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Paper relates to the Regulatory Objective (s) highlighted in bold below
<p>(a) protecting and promoting the public interest</p> <p>(b) supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law</p> <p>(c) improving access to justice</p> <p>(d) protecting and promoting the interests of consumers</p> <p>(e) promoting competition in the provision of services</p> <p>(f) encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession</p> <p>(g) increasing public understanding of citizens' legal rights and duties</p> <p>(h) promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles</p>

Purpose of Report

1. For Board Members to discuss the Executive's proposals to amend the definition of Academic Legal Training and related exemptions, and to decide whether the BSB should proceed with the proposed changes.
2. This work furthers the BSB's Strategic Plan aims of Standards, Equality and Independence.
 - Standards – by modernising the BSB's approach to the academic component of training and by quality assuring vocational Bar training providers;
 - Equality – by enabling a wider group of people who meet our standards, to also meet the definition of Academic Legal Training;
 - Independence – by strengthening the BSB's focus on outcome measures, empowering vocational Bar training providers to make decisions about whether a prospective barrister has met the requirements for Academic Legal Training.

Recommendations

3. The Board is invited to approve the proposals as set out in paragraph 8 below and in **Annex One** of the report.

Background

4. Phase One of the Authorisations Review Project last came before the Board on 30 November 2023. The Board agreed that the Executive should commence a public consultation on the proposals to amend the definition of Academic Legal Training and related exemptions.

5. The consequent public consultation ran from 9 January 2024 to 29 April 2024. We have considered the responses, which can be found at **Annex Two** to this paper. We have also set out our responses to the key comments we received to the consultation in **Annex Three**.
6. We recommend proceeding with the proposals as originally drafted.

Points for discussion

7. The four proposals for change are set out below. **Annex One** sets out additional detail and analysis.
 - i. Amend the BSB Handbook and the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy to reflect the proposed redefinition of successful completion of academic legal training;
 - ii. Replace the Bar Qualification Manual Part 2 with detailed guidance to vocational Bar training providers on admissions criteria for the Bar Training Course;
 - iii. Adopt an approach, to be set out in the proposed guidance to vocational Bar training providers, of strongly encouraging prospective barristers seeking exemptions from Academic Legal Training to approach vocational Bar training providers, in the first instance, for a decision regarding whether or not the requirements for commencing a course of study for the vocational component of Bar training have been met.
 - iv. Remove any requirement that a prospective barrister with a non-UK degree must obtain a Certificate of Academic Standing before commencing a Graduate Diploma in law course.
8. These proposals align with the **regulatory objective** of “*Encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession*” by enabling a wider group of suitably qualified prospective barristers to meet the requirements of successful completion of Academic Legal Training, and by removing unnecessary impediments to progression. The proposals will also enable us to meet the four key principles that underpin the standards set by the Authorisation Framework.

Accessibility

The proposed redefinition of academic legal training will make it possible for those who hold the equivalent of appropriate level 6 qualifications to train for the Bar.

Flexibility

Replacing Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual with detailed guidance to vocational Bar training providers will enable them to use their judgement and experience to determine whether a prospective barrister has provided evidence of having met the requirements of Academic Legal Training, rather than being bound by inflexible rules that require reference back to the BSB.

Affordability

Removing the need for a range of waivers and exemptions associated with the academic component and the attendant fees for those applications would make accessing training more affordable.

High standards

These proposals will not result in lower entry standards for the vocational component of Bar training. Graduate level entry will very much be the norm and vocational Bar training providers will be at liberty to develop more selective admissions policies as they see fit, subject to authorisation. The threshold standard for completion of the academic component, as set out in the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy, is not changing.

9. Guidance to vocational Bar training providers, replacing what is currently Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual, will make clear the matters to which they must have regard when dealing with applications involving the equivalency of qualifications, and successful coverage of the Foundations of Legal Knowledge. vocational Bar training providers will be held to account in respect of their admissions policies and decision-making, both through the authorisation and re-authorisation process, and through on-going monitoring by the BSB's Supervision team.

Consultation Responses and Stakeholder Engagement

10. We received 33 responses to the public consultation, across a range of stakeholders. Ten were from vocational Bar training providers, seven were from registered barristers, five were from unregistered barristers, three were from other organisations, three were from other legal professionals, two were from law students, two were from Legal Regulatory/ Representative Bodies, and one from a Specialist Bar Association.
11. The responses were broadly supportive (see **Annex Two**). The main concerns were around the BSB having clear guidance for vocational Bar training providers. The biggest voices of opposition were from the Bar Council and the Council of the Inns of Court, who were against removing degree ('2:2') requirement and permitting vocational Bar training providers greater scope to exercise judgment as to whether entry requirements for Bar training had been met. We have considered these concerns (see **Annex Three**). We think that the concerns can be met and that we should proceed as planned.

Part 1 – Public

12. We met with the Bar Council on 9 July 2024 to discuss their response. Their concluding view, which we agreed we would feed back to the Board, was:-

“The BSB are group of very talented people and good at what they do, and transparent in the way they do it. We have confidence in the current approach so the Bar Council would prefer things stay the way they are”

We also met with the Council of the Inns of Court on 15 July 2024 (verbal feedback to be provided to the Board at the meeting).

13. We also met with the Legal Services Board on 3 July 2024. They were supportive of the BSB’s plans to move towards what they consider to be a much more modern system of regulation. We additionally met with the vocational Bar training providers before commencing the public consultation, and they were broadly in favour of the proposals. Concerns raised were again around the BSB creating clear guidance for them.

Equality and Diversity

14. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out as part of developing the consultation, to identify potential impacts of the proposed changes. A summary of the key impacts identified was included in the published consultation.
15. It is our view that the proposals could further promote equality, diversity and inclusion at the bar by removing unnecessary barriers to entry and increasing flexibility and accessibility. A focus on degree equivalence is more inclusive, as applicants who have undertaken relevant training and experience outside an academic degree programme could be eligible for admission to a vocational course for Bar training.
16. There are risks involved with giving vocational Bar training providers more discretion in determining whether applicants are ready to commence Bar training, especially if they choose to set more stringent requirements than the minimum set by the BSB or requirements which are lower than the minimum we set. The consultation paper sought to address this risk and explained how we will mitigate and manage this risk.
17. Responses to the public consultation indicated that the matters we had identified were broadly the right ones, with additional comments for us to consider. We have set these out below, together with our response.

Consultation feedback	BSB response
Even if proposals do result in a broader range of people gaining access to Bar training, this will not remove potential barriers to their progress later on, eg when applying for pupillage.	This is true but is beyond the remit of the present consultation to address; however, it is very much on our radar in other areas, such as the research on pupillage recruitment.

Consultation feedback	BSB response
Disadvantage may be layered upon disadvantage if students have to apply to multiple vocational Bar training providers to find one that will admit them.	This is not a consequence of the proposed changes; students already apply to a range of vocational Bar training providers; it is not the role of the BSB to prevent this and it is not clear now this in itself is potentially discriminatory.
Placing the onus on vocational Bar training providers to determine entrance standards will mean that there is potential for discriminatory inconsistency.	This assumes that vocational Bar training providers will be determining the standard for completion of the academic component; this is not the case as the BSB will continue to prescribe the standard and vocational Bar training providers will be expected to apply the guidelines provided by the BSB and to follow their authorised admissions policies.

Next Steps

18. If the Board endorses these proposals, we will undertake the following actions:-
- i. Issue a press release during the week commencing 5 August 2024 with the proposed rule change and summary of consultation responses;
 - ii. Finalise the guidance to vocational Bar training providers by engaging with internal and external stakeholders;
 - iii. Work towards implementation in September 2026, bearing in mind that vocational Bar training providers will need a year to embed these changes.

Annexes

Annex One - The four proposals for change in Phase One of the Authorisations Review

Annex Two - Consultation Analysis
Proposed amendments to the definition of Academic Legal Training and related exemptions

Annex Three - Responses to key comments we received to the public consultation

The four proposals for change in Phase One of the Authorisations Review.**1. Change 1: The proposed redefinition of academic legal training**

- (a) The requirement set out in the BSB Handbook (HB) at rQ3 that, “... *To be called to the Bar by an Inn an individual must have successfully completed the following: (1) academic legal training.....*” remains unaltered.
- (b) The definition of academic legal training in the BSB Handbook (part 6 ‘Definitions’) is amended to read as follows:
“The requirements for satisfactory completion of academic legal training (the academic component for training for the Bar) are as stated from time to time in the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy.”
- (c) Section 1 of the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy, (dealing with the academic component), to be amended so that it reads as set out below.

2. ACADEMIC COMPONENT

In order to complete the requirements of the ‘Academic Legal Training’ (academic component of training for the Bar), prospective barristers will have to have successfully completed one of the following:

- (i) *a degree awarded at level 6 (or above) of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications; or*
- (ii) *a degree and a degree conversion programme (e.g., Graduate Diploma in Law) awarded at level 6 (or above) of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications; or*
- (iii) *the equivalent of a qualification awarded at level 6 (or above) of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications,*

that demonstrates the following Competence from the Professional Statement:

1. Barristers’ distinctive characteristics**Legal knowledge, skills and attributes**

Barristers will:

1.2 Have a knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and principles of public and private law.

They will have a good understanding of the general principles of law underpinning the legal system of England and Wales, including the implications of EU law, and be able to apply this as necessary.

Barristers should:

a) Be able to recall and comprehend and accurately apply to factual situations the principles of law and rules of procedure and practice specified by the Bar Standards Board.

b) Be able to keep up to date with significant changes to these principles and rules.

Competence in respect of the academic component incorporates the need for prospective barristers to be able to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the “seven foundations of legal knowledge” subjects: Criminal Law, Equity and Trusts, Law of the European Union, Obligations 1 (Contract), Obligations 2 (Tort), Property/Land Law, Public Law (Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and Human Rights Law).”

3. **Change 2: Replacing the Bar Qualification Manual part 2 with detailed guidance to vocational Bar training providers**

- (a) Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual to be replaced with detailed guidance to vocational Bar training providers making admissions decisions in respect of prospective barristers seeking to commence the vocational component of Bar training. vocational Bar training providers will be required commit to following the guidance as a condition of (re)authorisation, and for such compliance to be subject to BSB supervision.
- (b) The drafting of the proposed vocational Bar training provider guidance will seek to ensure:
 - (i) consistency in admissions decision making by vocational Bar training providers;
 - (ii) maintenance of high standards in the selection of prospective barristers admitted to vocational component courses;
 - (iii) clarity regarding coverage of the Foundations of Legal Knowledge as a prerequisite for admission to a vocational component course;
 - (iv) clarity regarding the equivalence of non-degree qualifications (e.g. Solicitors’ Qualifying Examination 1 or Cilex) for the purposes of meeting the requirements of the proposed redefinition of Academic Legal Training;
 - (v) clarity regarding the expectation that a prospective barrister should, in the first instance, apply to a vocational Bar training provider for admission to a course of study for the vocational component of Bar training, to enable the vocational Bar training provider to assess the extent to which the application meets the requirements of the proposed redefinition of Academic Legal Training.

4. **Change 3: Encouraging prospective barristers to apply to vocational Bar training providers in the first instance**

Replacing Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual with the proposed guidance to vocational Bar training providers, will mean that the following exemption request provided for by Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual, and currently processed by the BSB Authorisations team, fall away:

- (i) Requests for Exercise of Discretion (for degrees awarded below lower second-class honours (2:2));
 - (ii) Permission for the reactivation of Stale Qualifications;
 - (iii) Permission for early commencement of the vocational component of Bar training;
 - (iv) Individual subject exemptions based on degrees awarded by England & Wales Degree Providers, Non-England and Wales Degree Providers, or on the basis of Professional Qualifications
5. These all become matters to be considered by a vocational Bar training provider , following the proposed guidance, when deciding whether to admit a prospective barrister to a vocational component course.
6. Prospective barristers will still be able to apply to the BSB, under rQ7, for a general exemption in respect of any aspect of academic legal training. The proposed guidance will, however, strongly encourage applications to be made in the first instance to a vocational Bar training provider , which will assess the application in the context of an application to join vocational component course and be expected to give reasons for the rejection of any application.
7. **Change 4: The BSB will no longer require Certificates of Academic Standing**

Currently, a graduate with a non-UK degree wishing to enrol for a Graduate Diploma in Law course to complete Academic Legal Training, must first apply to the BSB for a Certificates of Academic Standing. Under these proposals, the BSB will no longer have any involvement in this sanctioning such applications. It would be for the University offering the Graduate Diploma in Law course to determine whether its entry criteria were met. The BSB's regulatory oversight would be engaged from the point at which a prospective barrister has successfully completed a Graduate Diploma in Law course and applies to commence a course of study for the vocational component of training for the Bar.

Consultation Analysis

Proposed amendments to the definition of Academic Legal Training and related exemptions

1. Between January 2024 and April 2024, the BSB undertook a public consultation on its proposals around its proposed amendments to the definition of Academic Legal Training and related exemptions. The consultation paper can be found [here](#).
2. We received 33 responses to the consultation. Of the responses, ten were from education and training providers, seven were from registered barristers, five were from unregistered barristers, three were from other organisations, three were from other legal professionals, two were from law students, two were from Legal Regulatory/ Representative Bodies, and one from a Specialist Bar Association.

Q1 - Do you agree with our proposals for changing the definition of academic legal training as described in above in the first key change?

3. Out of the 33 responses received, eighteen broadly agreed with the proposal to change the definition of academic legal training. Twelve respondents disagreed with the proposal, two neither agreed nor disagreed, and one did not respond to the question.
4. Those supporting the proposal consisted of nine Education and Training providers, two law students, three unregistered barristers, two other legal professionals, the Legal Services Consumer Panel, and the Bar Council. Those opposed consisted of seven registered barristers, two unregistered barristers, one Education and Training provider, the Council of the Inns of Court, and Inner Temple.
5. Among responses that agreed with the proposal, five gave reasons why they supported the change. Three mentioned the benefit of consolidating the definition into one place for clarity, two mentioned that the change would enable greater flexibility in the future. One response mentioned the benefit of enabling work experience to count towards academic legal training, and one mentioned that the proposals represented a sensible compromise between competence and inclusion. Fifteen supporting responses did not give their reasons for supporting the change.

The proposed, revised, definition is sufficient in directing readers to refer to the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy, and tapers the complexities surrounding the current definition of academic legal training by consolidating the requirements in one document.

BACFI

6. Respondents who disagreed with the proposal gave a number of reasons why they opposed the change. Three responses highlighted the importance of a qualifying law degree, and the topics it covered, as a baseline standard. Two responses stated that the proposals did not actually address the objectives, or fix the issues, identified in the consultation document. Other issues raised were a lack of consistency, the lack of evidence for the change in the consultation document, and that the SQE did not represent an equivalent qualification to a QLD and should not be viewed as such. Six responses that disagreed with the proposal did not provide any reasons for opposing the change.

The prescriptive detail with regard to what many describe as a 'qualifying' law degree (noted by the completed of prescribed modules) is exceptionally important to the bar, the topics that are covered, whilst some may be less relevant to certain practice areas, provide a necessary basic understanding of the legal system within the UK.

Individual Barrister

The primary rationale given behind the proposed amendments is the prescriptiveness of the current standards and the subsequent complexity of waivers and exemptions. However, the proposed amendments do not actually go on to substantively address either of these issues or provide adequate guidance.

Arden Law School

This proposal is framed as being largely about achieving simplicity, with the objective that all the substantive requirements for academic legal training will be found in the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy. With that, the Bar Council has no issue, provided that all the requirements are actually to be found there. If other proposed changes were to be implemented, it does not seem that that objective will be achieved - if, for example, key aspects are left to the AETOs to determine or if Part 2 is removed from the Bar Qualification Manual.

Bar Council

Q2 - Do you agree with our proposal to remove Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual?

7. Out of the 33 responses received, seventeen broadly agreed with the proposal to change the definition of academic legal training. Thirteen respondents disagreed with the proposal, two neither agreed nor disagreed, and one did not respond to the question.
8. Those supporting the proposal consisted of nine Education and Training providers, two law students, two unregistered barristers, two other legal professionals, the Legal Services Consumer Panel, and the Association of Law Teachers. Those opposed consisted of seven registered barristers, two unregistered barristers, one Education and Training provider, the Council of the Inns of Court, Inner Temple, and the Bar Council.

9. Among responses that agreed with the proposal, five gave reasons why they supported the change. Reasons given were that the change would streamline or simplify the process (four responses) and that the proposal would improve access to the profession (one response). One response stated that although they generally supported the change, the proposed changes in paragraph 29 of the consultation document may require further development. Twelve responses did not give their reasons for supporting the change.

It makes eminent sense to have detailed information regarding the academic and vocational stages in one document (the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy “CAS”). We agree with the proposal to remove Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual.

City Law School

We agree with the proposal to reduce the complexity of the requirements currently contained within Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual and have no objection to removing the requirements for authorisation to be placed in the Curriculum and Assessment Strategy. Whether the proposal in para 29 requires further work is a more complex matter.

Association of Law Teachers

10. Respondents who disagreed with the proposal gave a number of reasons why they opposed the change. Three responses highlighted the importance of clear minimum standards, and/or the risk of lower standards if existing stipulations were removed (seven responses). Three responses stated their opposition to the removal of the requirement for a degree at a minimum 2:2 class, three responses highlighted the importance of the BSB remaining responsible for defining and determining when individuals have met the minimum standards, and two responses highlighted the risks of educational institutions determining who had met the standards given that they would be motivated by profit (and thus likely to have an incentive to admit lower quality students). Other reasons given for opposing the change were concerns about a lack of consistency, the lack of pupillages available if access was expanded (both mentioned in two responses) that the retained BSB power to grant exemptions would conflict with the proposals, that the BSB’s reauthorisation power would constrain the autonomy of providers, and that the consultation document had not provided any evidence to demonstrate the need for the change. Eight responses that disagreed with the proposal did not provide any reasons for opposing the change.

Part 1 – Public

This Part of the Bar Qualification Manual plays a fundamental and vital role in maintaining high standards (a principle which the BSB supports) and, in turn, protecting the ordinary members of the public and their interests. It unambiguously specifies qualifications which individual candidates can be verified against and which can reliably assure that the competencies required at the academic stage have been attained... the standards set by Part 2 are appropriate and ensure the regulatory objectives referred to above are met.

The Bar Council

COIC considers that the BSB should retain, and not delegate to AETOs, any decision regarding the equivalence of qualifications, or exemption from qualifications requirement. Those are key regulatory decisions.

COIC

It is vital that there is a minimum standard to be able to study on the Bar Course. This is particularly important when consideration is given to the fact that, the majority of students study their bar course with private institutions, institutions who consider profit as a key factor.

Registered Barrister

Q3 - Do you agree with our proposal that Authorised Education and Training Organisations make admissions decisions based on the revised definition of academic legal training and in accordance with our guidance?

11. Out of the 33 responses received, eighteen broadly agreed with the proposal for AETOs to make admissions decisions based on the revised definition, and fifteen respondents disagreed with the proposal.
12. Those supporting the proposal consisted of eight Education and Training providers, two law students, two unregistered barristers, one registered barrister, two other legal professionals, the Legal Services Consumer Panel, BACFI, and the Association of Legal Teachers. Those opposed consisted of six registered barristers, three unregistered barristers, one other legal professional, two Education and Training providers, the Council of the Inns of Court, Inner Temple, and the Bar Council.
13. Among responses that agreed with the proposal, eight gave made comments on the proposals, largely around what they felt would be needed to be put in place if the change went ahead. Four responses highlighted the importance of the BSB providing clear guidance documents to support AETOs in making these decisions. Three responses highlighted the importance of controls to address any conflict of interest (in particular, the incentive for providers to admit fee paying students). Two responses stated the importance of where responsibility resided for any admissions decisions (i.e. either the BSB or the providers themselves). Ten responses did not give their reasons for supporting the change.

Part 1 – Public

Strong guidance will still be needed to ensure that the BSB's desired outcomes, specifically high quality academic training which allows barristers to provide a competent and effective service, are achieved. With such strong guidance in place, it would appear appropriate that the Authorised Education and Training Organisations are best placed to judge whether a candidate has the required knowledge to complete their course, especially given that they would hold the data regarding their current and past pupils and how they fared.

LSCP

We note that going forward this would mean that if a student is rejected and not offered a place, the reasons for the rejection must be made clear (i.e. do we consider that the student has not satisfied the Academic Stage or is it a CLS specific requirement which has not been met)... We would ask that the information provided to students by the BSB makes it clear that AETOs are permitted to set their own entry requirements which may be more stringent than the minimum requirements set out in the CAS.

City Law School

14. Respondents who disagreed with the proposal gave a number of reasons why they opposed the change. Three responses stated that it would be impossible to mitigate the risks inherent in the proposal (such as AETOs not following the guidance or admitting too many poor students). Three responses stated the importance of the BSB maintaining, as the regulator of training, the responsibility for setting out and enforcing qualification requirements. Three responses stated that they disagreed with AETOs having responsibility for making decisions on standards given that they had an incentive to admit students due to the associated fees income. Nine responses that disagreed with the proposal did not provide any reasons for opposing the change.

It is difficult to see how an appropriate and rigorous oversight of the kind envisaged by the BSB would involve fewer BSB resources, which is said to be one of the reasons for the proposals. This increases the Bar Council's concerns about the proposed change and the impact it could have on proper fulfilment by the BSB of its regulatory functions in this area. It is for the BSB to specify, with precision, the qualification requirements for prospective barristers to meet. That is a fundamental part of the BSB's role, as its over-seeing regulator, the LSB, appears to recognise.

Bar Council

I believe they [AETOs] are primarily motivated by the fees of the course which is quite expensive and generates a large revenue. So there is the incentive to let people in who aren't necessarily suited.

Unregistered Barrister

Q4 - Do you agree with our proposal to no longer require Certificates of Academic Standing?

15. Out of the 33 responses received, twenty broadly agreed with the proposal to no longer require Certificates of Academic Standing, and eight respondents disagreed. Three respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, and two responses did not include a response to the question.
16. Those supporting the proposal consisted of ten Education and Training providers, one law students, two unregistered barristers, two registered barristers, two other legal professionals, the Legal Services Consumer Panel, the Association of Law Teachers, and BACFI. Those opposed consisted of five registered barristers, two unregistered barristers, and the Bar Council.
17. Of the responses that supported the change, ten gave reasons for their support. Five responses stated that this change would reduce the administrative burden on the BSB and/or students. Three responses stated the current system was arbitrary to have requirements for the GDL when no such requirements were in place for Qualifying Law Degrees. Other reasons given were that it would remove the disparity between UK and overseas students, and that it would improve access to the course (both mentioned in two responses). One response said it also supported the removal of the requirement to study EU law. Ten responses did not provide their reasons for supporting the change.

Yes, I agree with the proposal to no longer require Certificates of Academic Standing. It appears to remove an unnecessary administrative burden and aligns with the approach taken for undergraduate law degrees.

Unregistered Barrister

As the BSB state, the current approach has little value and it is unjustifiable to regulate admittance to the Graduate Diploma in Law Course when the BSB does not currently regulate the undergraduate law degree.

BACFI

However, we would welcome the removal of the requirement that students have to study EU Law given the implementation of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023. This would bring the requirements in line with the SRA's requirements (which merely state that students must know "The place of EU law in the UK constitution")

Education and Training Provider (19)

18. Only one respondent who disagreed with this proposal gave reasons for opposing the change (the Bar Council). The reasons given were that they believed the equivalent of a British Degree at at least a 2:2 level should remain the minimum requirement, that changing the current system risked inconsistency between providers, that changing the current system risked a lowering of standards (particularly given that degree class strongly predicted success on the

course), and that the SRA still required certificates of academic standing and the BSB should be consistent with their approach. The remaining seven responses that disagreed with the proposal did not provide any reasons for opposing the change.

The Bar Council continues to consider the equivalent of a British Bachelor (Honours) degree awarded at a standard at least equivalent to a lower second-class Honours degree conferred in England and Wales should remain the minimum threshold for progressing to the vocational stage of training and is highly indicative of successful outcomes for prospective barristers.

The Bar Council

Q5 - Are there any potential equality impacts that you think we have not considered?

19. Out of the 33 responses received, eighteen responses raised additional equality impacts they felt had not been addressed in the consultation document. Thirteen explicitly agreed that the consultation had covered all potential equality impacts, and two did not provide a response.
20. Of the responses that raised additional equality impacts, four stated they felt the lack of consistency that would result from the proposals had the potential to impact on various groups, three mentioned impacts on students from minority ethnic backgrounds that had not been addressed in the consultation document, two mentioned impacts on students from poorer backgrounds due to high fees, and two mentioned concerns around adopting the SQE as an equivalent qualification due to concerns about its quality or its equality impacts. Three responses mentioned that the BSB would need to carefully monitor the impacts of any changes. Other responses mentioned equality impacts on overseas students, 'conventional barristers', or that the changes could further disadvantage barristers with lower academic attainment.

BAME candidates may be admitted to the academic/vocational stages of training on the basis of these proposals, but may disproportionately miss-out on securing Pupillage afterwards. This does not ultimately increase accessibility to the profession - it just means more people completing some of the stages but not fully qualifying.

Registered Barrister

The placing of the onus on AETOs to determine entrance standards will mean that there is inconsistency amongst their approaches, as they are separate and distinct entities, operating with their own policies and considerations. This impacts on fairness and equality which has not been properly addressed in the proposed amendments.

The Bar Council

It is possible that the new system would actually layer disadvantage on top of disadvantage by making students undertake multiple applications in different formats to different universities to see if they meet the entry requirements. If they are ultimately awarded a place on a course, they may find it difficult to pass (in particular the BSB's centralised assessments).

Education and Training Provider (19)

Q6 - If there is anything else you would like to comment on in relation to these proposals, please do so here.

21. Out of the 33 responses received, eighteen responses raised additional comments to the proposals. The most common theme of the additional comments was that the proposals as a whole would lower standards on the course or at the Bar, raised in seven responses. Three responses highlighted their belief in the BSB maintaining oversight and setting minimum standards. Three responses highlighted the potential challenge in adapting to the proposals if they were adapted and stated that consideration should be given to this when setting out the implementation time for any changes. Three responses stated that they felt the proposals gave too much discretion to AETOs. Other comments made included the importance of monitoring the impact of any change, considering the impact of AI on law and law teaching, that the current system was too bureaucratic, that the BSB should reevaluate and reform centralised assessments, and that the BSB should abolish the Bar Transfer Test.

Although there will still be an academic threshold requirement, this compromises the High Standards principle. Not all academic attainments are equivalent. Those who cleverly craft an application form (potentially with assistance) to meet the entry criteria by playing-up their experience to compensate for lower academic attainment may simply not be good enough to succeed in a career at the Bar.

Registered Barrister

In COIC's view, It remains essential, in the public interest, for the BSB to specify with precision the qualification requirements needed to demonstrate the good knowledge and understanding that the professional statement rightly requires.

COIC

The Bar is an intellectually rigorous profession. Not all those wishing to pursue a career at the Bar will ultimately succeed. However, in order to maintain public confidence for those relying on its services, and equally for those wishing to enter its ranks, it requires objective standards for qualifications. Whether an individual meets that standard, should be determined by the profession's regulator, the BSB, not by individual AETOs... it ultimately reflects poorly on the members of the profession and its regulator if it permits individuals to go through the expense of studying for the Bar, when they are statistically exceptionally unlikely to secure a pupillage and a practising certificate at the end of that process.

The Bar Council

Responses to key comments we received to the public consultation

Consultation feedback responses that are accepted and will be taken forward

<p>(1) BSB Guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations must be clear to ensure consistency of approach across Authorised Education and Training Organisations making admissions decisions</p>
<p>Made by: The Bar Association for Commerce, Finance & Industry</p>
<p>Response: We will ensure that redrafting of guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations addresses these concerns. We will work with Authorised Education and Training Organisations in refining drafts of the guidance to ensure it meets their concerns in terms of clarity regarding criteria, evidence, and process.</p>
<p>(2) The extent to which EU law needs to be covered is particularly unclear.</p>
<p>Made by: City Law School</p>
<p>Response: We will work with Authorised Education and Training Organisations in refining drafts of the guidance to ensure it meets their concerns in terms of clarity regarding criteria, evidence, and process. It is noted that the specification of EU law coverage required by the SRA in Solicitors’ Qualifying Examination 1 is minimal (candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of “<i>The place of EU law in the UK constitution</i>”).</p>
<p>(3) It is not obvious that Solicitors’ Qualifying Examination1 (which is normally taken by those who have already obtained a Level 6 degree) is equivalent to a Level 6 qualification.</p>
<p>Made by: COIC and Society of Legal Scholars</p>
<p>Response: It is right that Solicitors’ Qualifying Examination is neither: a qualification within the remit of OFQUAL, nor is it formally recognised by any awarding body as being at level 6 of the HE framework. It is, however, accepted by the SRA as providing coverage of the Foundations of Legal Knowledge at least consistent with the previous qualifying law degree/Graduate Diploma in Law requirement. As a result, we are not proposing that successful completion of Solicitors’ Qualifying Examination 1, without more, necessarily provides sufficient evidence of (the equivalent of) a qualification at level 6. We will work with Authorised Education and Training Organisations in refining the guidance to address these concerns, focussing in particular on the aspects of academic legal training, as redefined in these proposals, that may not have been covered by successful completion of Solicitors’ Qualifying Examination 1 alone.</p>

(4) Clarification needed as to whether a 2-year graduate conversion English Law LLB (“Graduate Conversion Degree”) would satisfy the proposed definition of academic legal training.
Made by: University of Dundee
Response: We will ensure that redrafting of guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations addresses these concerns and the extent to which completion of integrated and joint honours degrees could meet the requirements of the proposed redefinition of Academic Legal Training.

(5) Authorised Education and Training Organisations will need a long lead time for implementing these changes – the first intake to which these new rules could apply is probably September 2026.
Made by: City Law School
Our response: Accepted and will be reflected in the operationalisation timetable developed with Authorised Education and Training Organisations once BSB Board approval is secured.

Consultation feedback responses that are not accepted and will not be taken forward

(1) The BSB is allowing non-graduate entry to Bar training
Made by: Bar Council; COIC; Society of Legal Scholars
Response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Non-graduate entry is already possible under current arrangements via an rQ7 exemption granted by the BSB. The proposed redefinition simply regularises this and puts in additional safeguards through providing clear guidance. (ii) We did look at amending the proposed definition of academic legal training so that it required: (inter alia) :”... (iii) <i>a degree and the equivalent of a qualification awarded at level 6...</i>”. This might or might not have met the concerns of the Bar Council and COIC, but it would result in all non-graduates having to apply to the BSB via the rQ7 exemptions route. It also ignores the fact that a level 6 qualification is awarded at graduate level (ie the equivalent of an undergraduate degree). We believe that it is the graduate level of the prospective barrister’s qualification that is key. A degree is now one of a number of ways in which this can be demonstrated.

- (iii) Prospective barristers will continue, overwhelmingly, to be graduates and the proposed guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations will make clear that non-graduate entry is exceptional and should only be permitted where there is clear evidence of appropriate level 6 achievement.
- (iv) No clear rationale has been advanced as to why a non-graduate fellow of the CILEx, with level 6 qualifications, should be excluded from applying to join a course providing coverage of the vocational component of training for the Bar.

(2) The BSB should continue to set the ‘2:2’ minimum requirement as the threshold for graduate entry to the Bar

Made by: Bar Council

Response: The Bar Council objections stress the correlation between success at the Bar and classification of degree. The proposal does not dispute this point, but equally contends that holding a third-class degree should not, of itself, be a barrier to admission to the vocational component. A third-class non law graduate could gain a distinction in their Graduate Diploma in Law results. It is hard to see how such a candidate has less merit than one who scrapes a 2:2 in their non-law degree and then then just gets over the line in their Graduate Diploma in Law with a bare pass.

(3) The BSB should continue to make academic legal training exemption decisions itself, not delegate to Authorised Education and Training Organisations the power to determine “equivalence” or to make decisions about candidates on a “holistic” basis.

Made by: Bar Council; COIC

Response:

- (i) The BSB will continue to receive and determine rQ7 applications for exemptions from training requirements. The BSB does not admit prospective barristers to vocational stage courses. That has always been the function of the Authorised Education and Training Organisations. The proposals give Authorised Education and Training Organisations a wider remit in which to make admissions decisions.
- (ii) The legal advice obtained by the BSB on this issue indicates that there is no unlawful delegation of functions by the BSB in implementing these proposals, provided prospective barristers are not prevented from applying to the BSB directly for exemptions from Academic Legal Training under rQ7 (which they are not).

(4) The BSB should set the qualification requirements, and retain any decision-making power regarding those qualifications, including exemptions from those qualification requirements or whether some qualifications are 'equivalent'.

Made by: Bar Council

Response: Through the Handbook, Curriculum and Assessment Strategy, and guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations, the BSB will continue set the requirements for successful completion of Academic Legal Training. Where required, the BSB will also continue to receive and determine rQ7 applications for exemptions from training requirements. Authorised Education and Training Organisations will be given clear guidance in respect of 'equivalency' and monitored in respect of their admissions policies and decisions.

(5) The BSB must keep Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual so that there are clear rules relating to eligibility.

Made by: Bar Council

Response:

- (i) Part 2 of the Bar Qualification Manual is in urgent need of a comprehensive re-write;
- (ii) appropriately drafted guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations, coupled with effective supervision by the BSB, can ensure consistent admissions practices and the maintenance of high standards.

(6) *“The public would not expect a private organisation, which charges fees to the very individuals it is assessing, to decide whether those individuals meet the standard. Authorised Education and Training Organisations have their own pressures, including commercial pressures, which the BSB would be most unwise to ignore. They have strong financial incentives to maximise admission, in just the same way as they have had strong financial incentives to increase their fees year-on-year to a level which, for very many, is unaffordable.”*

Made by: Bar Council

Response:

- (i) No change is proposed to current arrangements regarding whether or not a prospective barrister has successfully completed the vocational component of training for the Bar.

- (ii) The proposals relate to the role of Authorised Education and Training Organisations in determining whether or not a prospective barrister can be allowed to commence the vocational component of training for the Bar.
- (iii) Authorised Education and Training Organisations already make decisions regarding whether or not a prospective barrister can be allowed to commence the vocational component of training for the Bar. These proposals simply envisage a new definition of the entry requirement, and the replacement of the current (not fit for purpose) Bar Qualification Manual Part 2 rules with clear and appropriate guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations as to how the residual discretion they have in relation to admissions decisions should be exercised.
- (iv) The student progression rates of Authorised Education and Training Organisations providing vocational component courses is a matter of public record. Those who consistently fail to achieve acceptable progression rates are unlikely to fare well in recruiting new students in the medium to longer term. Not only will Authorised Education and Training Organisations be required to adhere to the proposed guidance as a condition of (re)authorisation, they will also be subject to monitoring by the BSB's Supervision Team. There is a very recent and clear example of the BSB's Supervision Team intervening to halt recruitment at an Authorised Education and Training Organisation where outcomes gave rise to concerns.

- (7) “[Authorised Education and Training Organisations deciding who can commence Bar training are not making]...“admissions decisions”. They are decisions about qualifications – qualifications which set the standard for entry into the profession which the BSB regulates. Those decisions cannot appropriately be delegated to Authorised Education and Training Organisations.”

Made by: Bar Council

Response: Under the proposals, it is the BSB who will be determining the threshold competence requirements for completion of the academic component, and Authorised Education and Training Organisations applying them. That division of labour could be emphasised more in the guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations. An Authorised Education and Training Organisation, in applying regulations, will have to decide whether the Academic Legal Training requirements have been met (as they do at present). This does not mean that the Authorised Education and Training Organisation is thereby deciding what the qualifications are.

(8) The BSB is wrong to abandon the practice of issuing Certificates of Academic Standing. Even though 90% of applications are granted, the refusal of 10% offers an important protection for the public “...*from those with inappropriate qualification or experience from progressing to vocational training and potentially qualifying as barristers.*”

Made by: Bar Council

Response:

- (a) Permission to commence the academic stage of training is a matter for the academic institution offering the law degree or Graduate Diploma in question. The definition of successful completion of that academic training is a matter for the BSB as a regulator. The current proposal reflects that dichotomy very clearly.
- (b) Removing the requirement for a Certificate of Academic Standing does not increase risk for the consumers of legal services. Before being exposed to get anywhere near a ‘live’ client the prospective barrister would have to: Pass the Graduate Diploma in Law; be accepted onto a vocational component course; be admitted to an Inn; pass the Authorised Education and Training Organisation vocational component exams; pass the BSB centralised assessments; satisfy the remaining requirements for Call; succeed in obtaining pupillage (which it must be assumed is a very rigorous process in itself); and obtain a provisional practising certificate. In summary there are still eight hurdles to cross.

(9) The proposal will “...*leave critical aspects of the requirements for definition in (a) guidance that the BSB will give to Authorised Education and Training Organisations about how to apply that document, (b) the Authorised Education and Training Organisations own policies and practices (which may or may not be accessible, and may vary from Authorised Education and Training Organisation to Authorised Education and Training Organisation), and (c) the BSB’s practice in supervising those Authorised Education and Training Organisations. Taken together, that will be a notably less transparent, consistent or predictable system than the current one.*”

Made by: COIC & Inner Temple

Response: Authorised Education and Training Organisation policies will be accessible, as will BSB guidance. The BSB will have oversight of the clarity and precision of both. Inconsistencies in decision making cannot be ruled out, but they can be minimised.

(10) In respect of ‘stale degrees’, some “recency” requirement should remain, with the possibility of seeking exemption from the BSB in cases where it can be shown that there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. where a candidate has been working in a legal role since graduation and therefore kept current).

Made by: COIC

Response: We accept the importance of ‘recency’ of qualifications, and this will be reflected in guidance to Authorised Education and Training Organisations. We do not think that a rule to this effect should be retained requiring the submission of requests to the BSB for exemptions. The BSB is not in any better position to determine ‘recency’ than an Authorised Education and Training Organisation that has been authorised by the BSB to admit prospective barristers to a vocational component course.

(11) By implementing these proposals, the BSB will be lowering standards: “*As things stand a person who had obtained third class honours and failed modules in contract and criminal law would not meet the academic standard. On the revised criteria, he or she would.*”

Made by: COIC

Response:

- (a) A prospective barrister who has failed to pass one or more of the modules providing coverage of the Foundations of Legal Knowledge would not automatically be deemed to have met the requirements of academic legal training. The decision on admission would rest with the Authorised Education and Training Organisation, but in making that decision the Authorised Education and Training Organisation would be bound to have proper regard to BSB guidance and would be subject to BSB oversight of the operation of its admissions policy. It is envisaged that an Authorised Education and Training Organisation could require such an applicant to successfully complete some additional studies (for example a Graduate Diploma in Law module) as a condition attached to an offer of a place on a vocational component course.
- (b) The proposed guidance will direct Authorised Education and Training Organisations to admit only those prospective barristers presenting a profile providing credible evidence of being able to complete and benefit from the vocational component course. The BSB will monitor Authorised Education and Training Organisations and triangulate evidence to check that this indeed the case.

Meeting:	BSB Board	Date:	25 July 2024
Title:	Draft Annual Report 2023-24		
Authors:	Chris Fitzsimons and Wilf White		
Post:	Communications & Public Engagement Manager Director of Communications and Public Engagement		

Paper for:	Decision: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion: <input type="checkbox"/>	Noting: <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: <input type="checkbox"/> (enter text)
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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 consider the draft Annual Report 2023-24 for approval.

Recommendations

2. The Board is invited to approve the report for publication.

Points for discussion

3. The 2023-24 Annual Report records the policy developments we made during 2023-24 and our day-to-day work regulating barristers and specialised legal services businesses in England and Wales in the public interest. This year's report covers the second year of the Strategic Plan for 2022-25.
4. The report describes a challenging year but one in which the BSB made significant progress in improving productivity, performance and achieving operational excellence in delivering its core regulatory services.
5. Please also note that we are considering different approaches to compiling this report in the coming years, such as by combining it with other annual reports. As such, we may propose a different format to the Board next year.
6. We acknowledge that there was concern expressed about the report's cover image. We have had a policy during this strategy period of matching annual report covers to the business plans to which they refer, to ensure readers make the link between both documents. As such, the cover page for the annual report mirrors the 2023-2024 Business Plan. However, we have taken on board the concerns expressed and will provide the Board with more cover options to choose from next year.

Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

7. Following Board approval and subject to any necessary amendments, the report will be published on the BSB social media channels and website, with an accompanying press release, as in previous years.

BAR
STANDARDS
BOARD

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Annual Report 2023-2024

If you would like a version of this publication in an alternative format, please contact the Equality and Access to Justice (E&AJ) Team by telephone on 020 7611 1305 or: equality@barstandardsboard.org.uk

The Bar Standards Board regulates barristers and specialised legal services businesses in England and Wales in the public interest.

Foreword by the Chair of the Bar Standards Board, Kathryn Stone OBE



2023-2024 was the penultimate year of our current strategy. Over this year we continued to focus on improving our performance and achieving operational excellence. We did so both in delivering our core regulatory services as well as in our wider work across the organisation to achieve our strategic aims. We have already markedly improved our productivity in this period, particularly in concluding investigations. Alongside high-quality decision-making and high levels of productivity we are working hard to ensure that we provide a consistently prompt and responsive service across the organisation, and in particular so that both members of the public and barristers can be sure we will take the right decision and do so efficiently and quickly.

To support us in identifying improvements and ensuring that the enforcement system operates effectively and efficiently in the public interest, we commissioned the leading legal firm Fieldfisher LLP to conduct an independent end-to-end review of our enforcement policies and processes. The review has now been completed and published and its recommendations will be gradually implemented over the coming years. We have also been looking at how we can improve the Handbook, to ensure that it is easily navigable and easily understood by both barristers and the public alike.

Our work to encourage best practice in the way chambers promote standards, equality and access continued over the last year, and took me to meet barristers in every circuit in England and Wales for the second time since I became Chair of the Board in 2022. The Director General and I had fascinating conversations with barristers, practice managers, clerks and other chambers professionals about the challenges and opportunities encountered by both large and small chambers across all circuits and we will be using this input to decide on our next steps. We shall continue to work closely with chambers and other key stakeholders, such as the Bar Council, to set clear expectations for the crucial role chambers have in upholding standards, equality and access. The more effective chambers are in performing this role, the better the profession will serve the wider public interest and the less need there will be for regulatory intervention.

Over the last year, we have also made better use of the data and intelligence we collect and analyse so that we can deepen our understanding of the capacity the Bar will need to meet the future needs of consumers and the administration of justice. We will continue this work in the coming years. As we enter the final year of our current strategy, we will also consult on a new five-year strategy to ensure that it takes into account the views of all our stakeholders and provides us with a robust framework to achieve our key regulatory objectives.

This year we also published improved CPD guidance and templates to help practising barristers approach CPD in a structured and reflective manner and to promote good practice. Our work on Bar training – entailing supervising training providers and setting and marking centralised examinations - continued throughout the year and we also undertook a thematic review of the quality of vocational Bar training providers, the results of which will be published in 2024.

Over the past year we have made real progress with improving productivity and in achieving our strategic aims. I am proud of the commitment and dedication of our teams and their hard work in making this progress happen.

Kathryn Stone OBE

Chair of the Bar Standards Board

Introduction

In performing its regulatory functions, the Bar Standards Board has Regulatory Objectives which are set out in the Legal Services Act 2007. These are:

- protecting and promoting the public interest;
- supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law;
- improving access to justice;
- protecting and promoting the interests of consumers;
- promoting competition;
- encouraging an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession;
- increasing public understanding of the citizen's legal rights and duties;
- promoting and maintaining adherence to the professional principles. These are that barristers should act with independence and integrity, maintain proper standards of work, act in the best interests of their clients, comply with their duty to the court to act with independence in the interests of justice, and keep the affairs of their clients confidential; and
- promoting the prevention and detection of economic crime.

The Board of the BSB seeks to ensure that in performing its regulatory functions, all the BSB's activities focus on those key regulatory objectives. Those activities include:

- prescribing the education and training requirements for becoming a barrister and for ensuring that barristers' skills are maintained throughout their careers;
- authorising businesses that focus on advocacy, litigation, and specialist legal advice;
- setting standards of conduct and taking action where it appears that they are not being met;
- monitoring the service provided by barristers and the organisations the BSB authorises to ensure they meet the BSB's requirements;
- assuring the public that everyone the BSB authorises to practise is competent to do so;
- promoting equality, diversity and inclusion at the Bar; and
- seeking to improve access to justice and supporting public legal education.

The BSB seeks to do this by taking a proportionate, risk-based approach to regulation. We monitor the market for barristers’ services in order to identify the risks that could prevent the Regulatory Objectives from being met. We then focus our attention on those risks that we think pose the biggest threats to the public interest and take action to try to prevent those risks from occurring, or to reduce their impact.

Our [Business Plan for 2023-24](#) was set as part of the BSB’s [2022-25 Strategic Plan](#). That strategy, which was developed after extensive consultation, led the BSB to adopt a vision that

“we will ensure that the BSB regulates the Bar in the public interest by promoting high standards, equality and access to justice”.

We also agreed the following five strategic aims:

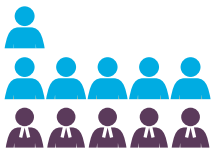
Efficiency	delivering our core regulatory operations quickly, economically and to a high standard
Standards	ensuring that barristers provide a high quality and responsive service throughout their careers
Equality	promoting equality, diversity and inclusion at the Bar and at the BSB and the profession’s ability to serve diverse consumers
Access	promoting consumer understanding of legal services and choice and good value in using those services (covering both the supply of, and demand for, barristers’ services) and
Independence	strengthening the BSB’s independence, capability, self-confidence and credibility.

Many of our activities contribute to more than one regulatory objective and more than one strategic aim. For example, our work to clarify our expectations of the role which chambers should play in support of our regulatory objectives includes overseeing standards, promoting equality and facilitating access for consumers.

This report sets out how the BSB took forward those strategic aims in 2023/24.

The BSB's year in numbers

About us



Our Board has 6 lay members (including the lay Chair) and 5 barrister members



17,656 registered barristers regulated

At 31 March 2024 we were responsible for regulating 17,656 practising barristers and around a further 59,299 barristers who were not practising (we regulated 17,418 practising and around 58,000 non-practising barristers in 2022-23)



We authorised 145 specialised legal services businesses in 2023-24 (compared with 130 in 2022-23)



£15,562k – our income in 2023-24
£15,525k – our expenditure in 2023-24

(compared to income of £13,990k and expenditure of £13,599k in 2022-23)

Bar training



7,198

Students sat 7,198 centralised examinations in 2022-23 as part of their Bar training (compared to 7,381 in 2021-22)

586



We received 586 applications from solicitors, EU lawyers, overseas lawyer and legal academics wanting to transfer to the Bar (compared to 498 last year)



2,113

We processed 2,113 applications for waivers and exemptions from the qualification rules set out in the BSB Handbook (compared to 2,011 in 2022-23)



305,000

users visited our website (compared to 667,083 in 2022-23). The decrease in this figure is due to recent changes to how Google analytics measures website visits.



253,000

page views of our Barristers Register (compared to 427,246 in 2022-23)

Regulating barristers



1,802



We received 1,802 new reports about the conduct of barristers (compared to 1,911 in 2021-22)

9

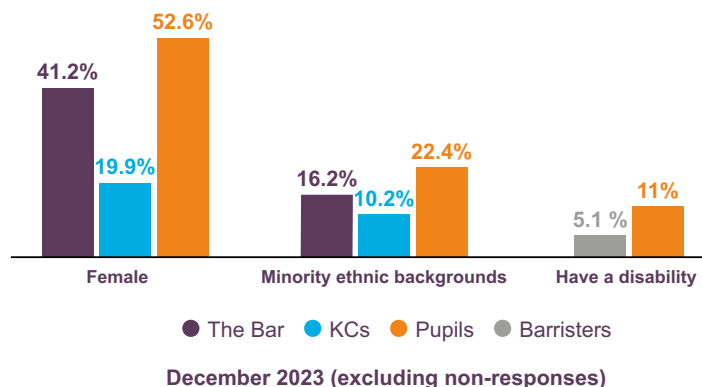
barristers were suspended

10

barristers were disbarred

(compared to 5 and 9 respectively in 2022-23)

Promoting diversity at the Bar



Our Regulatory Approach

In support of our five strategic priorities, we took forward reforms of our regulatory approach over the year, aiming to ensure that the Bar Standards Board is able to identify and manage risks to the Regulatory Objectives before they have an impact on the public interest. Central to this work was the overhaul of our approach to the gathering, collation and analysis of the intelligence we receive from a wider range of sources. As part of this work, our Data and Intelligence Strategy 2024–2027 was published in May 2024. We believe that effective data and intelligence are essential for the BSB to exercise its regulatory functions, so that we can work effectively and be agile, evidence-led and risk-based. The Data & Intelligence Strategy therefore sets out a vision and objectives for data and intelligence at the BSB, an implementation roadmap, and the outcomes the BSB seeks to achieve.

We understand that there is a need to revise the Handbook, to ensure that it is easily navigable and easily understood by both barristers and the public alike and represents good regulatory practice. We have therefore started making design changes to the layout of the Handbook and Code of Conduct as well as essential amendments flowing from other priority work programmes and this work will continue going forward. We have also reviewed our current risk framework to make sure that intelligence is joined up and that our front-line teams have more discretion to act promptly in response to emerging risks. The review has been completed and we will shortly publish a webpage alongside a blog summarising the review.

The BSB Chair and Director General continued to meet with the profession across each circuit in England and Wales in 2023-2024 to explore how we can support chambers to be more effective and consistent forces for high standards, for equality and inclusion, and for access to justice. At these meetings, we discussed our proposal to consolidate and promote best practice in chambers' oversight of standards, equality and access. In 2024, the Board will consider the feedback received at these roundtables and the responses to our consultation and will then decide on how best to implement the proposals. Our aim is to ensure we work closely with the Bar Council and other key stakeholders to promote best practice without increasing the burden of regulation.

Strategic Aim 1 – Efficiency

Delivering our core regulatory operations quickly, economically and to a high standard

What we said we would do

In our Business Plan for 2023-2024 we said that, although the quality of our decision-making remained high, our priority was to improve its timeliness. We intended to ensure that the increase which we have made in investment in this area will enable us to meet key service standards.

We said that we would continue, day-to-day, to:

1. assess reports of potential professional misconduct and risks to our regulatory objectives, taking enforcement or other action where necessary; and
2. deal with requests for authorisation, exemptions and waivers.

We said that we would:

3. conduct an independent end-to-end review of our enforcement policies and processes and overhaul the key IT systems which support these processes to reflect the recommendations of a recent review by Deloitte;
4. conclude the ongoing review into our decision-making processes for authorisations and begin implementing its recommendations; and
5. review the role of the Independent Reviewers in our enforcement and authorisations processes.

What we did

We continued to assess reports of potential professional misconduct and to deal with requests for authorisations, exemptions and waivers throughout the year. **(1 & 2)**. In March 2024, the Board approved a new set of KPIs and a balanced scorecard to measure the BSB's performance in delivering its core regulatory operations and will regularly review performance against these objectives.

Significant improvements in our productivity were achieved over the year. For example:

- the initial Assessment Team processed 911 reports in the first half of 2023-24 compared to 1582 in the whole of 2022-23.
- the Authorisations Team dealt with 240 applications in the second quarter of 2023/24 – the highest total for a year.
- the Investigations Team reduced its caseload from 178 at the beginning of the third quarter of 2022/23 to 90 at the beginning of the third quarter of 2023/24, concluding 117 investigations in the third and fourth quarters of 2023/24.

Authorisation caseloads continue to rise, as in previous years, due in part to a rise in applications from transferring overseas lawyers and we are putting measures in place to address this increase in volume.

The independent end-to-end review of our enforcement processes was completed by leading law firm Fieldfisher LLP and a report was presented to the Board **(3)**. Fieldfisher reviewed how well the BSB's enforcement system operates from first receipt of concerns about barristers' conduct right through to final decisions being made on sanctions to be imposed by staff, an Independent Decision-making Panel or by a Disciplinary Tribunal. Fieldfisher found that the BSB's enforcement procedure was largely in line with similar models used in professional regulation elsewhere and that fundamentally the approach in place is appropriate. The report details a wide range of recommendations for improvement, spanning eight different areas. The Senior Leadership Team is currently developing proposals to take forward these recommendations.

Our review into our decision-making processes for authorisations **(4)** was opened for public consultation in early 2024 and this work will be delivered in phases over the coming year. Our review of the role of the Independent Reviewers in our enforcement and authorisations processes was completed as planned and new policies were adopted and published following a Board meeting in October 2023 **(5)**.

Strategic Aim 2 – Standards

Ensuring that barristers provide a high quality and responsive service throughout their careers

What we said we would do:

We said that the core work that we would conduct through the year would focus on:

1. regulating those who provide vocational training and pupillage;
2. setting the curriculum for training as a barrister and managing the centralised assessments in civil and criminal litigation and professional ethics;
3. assuring standards across the Bar by supervising chambers and regulating specialised legal services businesses known as “entities” to ensure that they are meeting our rules, and targeting regulation where we see evidence that standards need to improve – in recent years, for example, we have set out new guidance for those working in the Youth Courts and Coroners Courts;
4. continuing to meet our obligations under the Money Laundering Regulations and under the regulations relating to financial sanctions and liaising with relevant stakeholders, including other regulators, the Office for Professional Body Anti-Money Laundering Supervision (our oversight regulator for money laundering), the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI), HM Treasury and law enforcement agencies and
5. maintaining and revising the BSB Handbook, which defines the core duties and rules relating to practice at the Bar.

We said that we would seek to strengthen these arrangements through measures including:

6. continuing our existing programme of work on assuring the competence of barristers throughout their careers, including work to review regulatory requirements during the early years of practice and those that relate to Continuing Professional Development;
7. developing arrangements for the assessment of advocacy and negotiation skills during pupillage as the final part of our reforms to Bar training;
8. undertaking a thematic review of the quality of vocational Bar training providers, how they ensure that standards are maintained once a student is admitted and what systems are in place to ensure that a student develops to their full potential, whatever their starting point; and

9. completing our review of the regulation of standards in non-professional life and of barristers' use of social media in the light of our recent consultation.
10. working with the profession to clarify our regulatory expectations of chambers and to promote best practice in Chambers' oversight of standards.

What we did:

Our work to maintain standards in Bar training - through our supervision of training providers and our setting and marking of centralised examinations - continued throughout the year **(1,2&3)**. We also undertook a thematic review of the quality of vocational Bar training providers, looking at how they ensure that standards are maintained once a student is admitted and what systems are in place to ensure that a student develops to their full potential, whatever their starting point. A final report and recommendations will be considered by the Board in 2024. **(7.)**

In December we published our **second Annual Report** to the Board on Bar Training covering the period from September 2022 to November 2023 along with a **further report giving detailed statistics** on enrolment, results and student progression by course provider. The Report provides the Board with in-depth insights into how the BSB seeks to ensure that standards are set, met, and assured during both the vocational and pupillage components of Bar training. We also published our **annual report on Bar Training statistics** by course provider **(8.)**. This report offers detailed statistics on results and progression broken down by course provider and aims to provide prospective Bar students with more information about the different courses and course providers which are now available.

Our evaluation of our Coroners' Courts' Competencies was completed in 2023 and we plan to publish a report and action plan in 2024. **(3.)** In January we published improved Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Guidance and Templates to help practising barristers understand and meet our CPD requirements and expectations, approach CPD in a structured and reflective manner, using feedback and self-assessment and demonstrate good practice. **(6.)** The CPD templates will be reviewed again in 2024. We also expect to have new means of assessment for advocacy in place in 2024, and negotiation the following year.

In October we published our Annual Report into Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorist Financing **(4.)** This Report sets out the actions that we have taken to counter money laundering, terrorist financing and economic crime in the period and explains how we collaborate with the Government, other regulators, the legal professions and law enforcement to tackle the threat of money laundering, terrorist funding and economic crime.

We recognise the need to revise the Handbook, to ensure that it is easily navigable and easily understood by both barristers and the public alike and represents good regulatory practice. **(5.)** We have therefore started making design changes to the layout of the Handbook and Code of Conduct as well as essential amendments flowing from other priority work programmes.

In September, following a public consultation, we published new guidance on barristers' conduct in non-professional life and on social media. **(9.)** After carefully considering the responses received to our consultation, we developed these guidance documents seeking to strike a balance between barristers' human rights and their professional obligations under the Handbook. The Guidance on the Regulation of Non-Professional Conduct seeks to clarify where the regulatory boundaries lie in relation to conduct that occurs outside the scope of a barrister's professional practice. The revised Social Media Guidance seeks to help barristers understand their duties under the BSB Handbook as they may apply to their use of social media, both in a professional and in a personal/private capacity. These revised guidance documents seek to provide greater clarity on how we will apply the existing rules rather than indicating a significant change to our approach.

Finally, the Chair and Director General met with the profession across each circuit in England and Wales to explore how we can support chambers to be more effective and consistent forces for high standards, for equality and inclusion, and for access to justice. At these meetings, we discussed our proposal to consolidate and promote best practice in chambers' oversight of standards, equality and access. In 2024, the Board will consider the feedback received at these roundtables and the responses to our consultation and will then decide on how best to implement the proposals. Our aim is to ensure we work closely with the Bar Council and other key stakeholders to promote best practice without increasing the burden of regulation **(10.)**

Strategic Aim 3 – Equality

Promoting diversity and inclusion at the Bar and the BSB and the profession's ability to serve diverse customers

What we said we would do:

We said that our work in this area would focus on:

1. clarifying the BSB's expectations of the Bar concerning equality, diversity and inclusion and highlighting opportunities for change;
2. holding the Bar to account for reducing racial and other inequalities across the profession;
3. promoting a culture of inclusion at the Bar and in legal services more generally;
4. building a diverse and inclusive workforce ensuring that the BSB is itself an example of the approach we are promoting; and
5. undertaking research with pupillage providers to investigate the recruitment outcomes of different approaches aimed at increasing diversity.

And as part of our work to clarify our regulatory expectations of chambers and to promote best practice we said that we would also:

6. review the Equality Rules to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and clearly set out minimum standards for chambers' and employers' oversight of diversity, including appropriate governance; and
7. work with the profession to encourage best practice in chambers with regard to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and eliminating bullying, discrimination and harassment.

What we did:

In early 2024 we published our Diversity at the Bar Report for 2023 **(1,2 & 3)**, which showed that the Bar continues to become more diverse and more representative of the society that it serves but that women and barristers from minoritised ethnic backgrounds remain underrepresented at the most senior levels of the Bar. This year has also seen the continuation of several longer-term trends, including an increase in the proportion of practising barristers who are female; those who are from a minority ethnic background; those who have primary care of a child; and those who are aged 55 or more. This annual report supports us in meeting our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and sets out an evidence base from which relevant and targeted policy can be developed to promote diversity and inclusion within the profession.

As in previous years, in 2023 we also published our annual report on the diversity of our workforce and Board members, demonstrating our commitment to reporting transparently on diversity data within the organisation. To ensure that the BSB is a diverse and inclusive workplace, we also began to develop an internal Anti-Racist Strategy in 2023 which we published in May 2024. **(4.)** In developing this Strategy, the BSB's workforce was surveyed and focus groups were held. Based on the evidence obtained through this work, an internal Anti-Racist Working Group (ARWG), including participation from the Race Equality taskforce, was then formed to recommend a strategy to the Senior Leadership Team and the BSB Board. We hope this Strategy will demonstrate that the BSB leads by example, embodying the values of diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work.

As part of our commitment to ensuring that reporting of misconduct by barristers, including bullying and harassment within the Bar, is taken seriously, we began a series of outreach presentations in early 2024, with an initial well-attended session held in London for the South Eastern Circuit, and we plan to deliver a presentation in each circuit in England and Wales throughout the year. Our aim is to ensure that anyone who wishes to report a concern to us feels comfortable about doing so, understands what will happen after they have made a report and can be confident that appropriately trained BSB staff will handle such reports sensitively and efficiently. These sessions entail a presentation delivered by our staff who deal with reports of concerns about barristers and an opportunity to ask us questions. **(7.)**

Our review of the Equality Rules is being taken forward as an integral part of our initiative to clarify our expectations of chambers **(6.)**. We will begin a public consultation about our proposed revised rules in September 2024. In 2023, the BSB undertook research to strengthen our evidence base around pupillage recruitment to inform the development of the BSB's policies. As a result of this research, two reports on pupillage recruitment were published in May 2024. **(5.)** Over the coming year, the Board will also consider the feedback received at our most recent series of roundtables with chambers and the responses to our consultation and will then decide on how best to implement the proposals to support chambers in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and eliminating bullying, discrimination and harassment. **(7.)**

Strategic Aim 4 – Access

Promoting consumer understanding of legal services and choice and good value for those who use those services

What we said we would do:

We said that our core work would focus on improving consumer choice and increasing their understanding of the legal services market by:

1. promoting public legal education in collaboration with our fellow regulators and with other frontline providers of help to those in legal need;
2. continuing to ensure that our transparency rules are being complied with and are being effective;
3. continuing our examination of the role of new technology in the legal services market, in collaboration with others and taking part in joint activities with other regulators, tech companies and other stakeholders as appropriate. Looking at whether consumers' interests can be well served by online comparison or by other intermediaries offering to broker access to barristers;
4. looking at our “association rules” which regulate how barristers interact with intermediaries which provide information about their services

What we did:

Our work in public legal education continued to focus on working with our fellow regulators and with a range of frontline legal help providers to agree common approaches to meeting legal needs. We also work with the other regulators through Legal Choices, which we rejoined in 2023, and are confident that our participation will serve consumers' interests and enable the platform to provide more complete coverage of regulated legal services issues. **(1.)**

We continued our work to evaluate the role of new technology in the legal services market and our participation in the work of LawtechUK and recruited dedicated policy staff to take this work forward including looking at whether consumers' interests can be well served by online comparison or by other intermediaries offering to broker access to barristers. **(3.)** Our digital comparison tool (DCT) market study continued during 2023, looking at how DCTs enable consumers to locate and select legal service providers, using a range of criteria such as location, ratings and reviews to help with this process. Our current study of four DCTs looks at whether and how the DCT market could further our regulatory objectives to protect and promote the public interest, improve access to justice, promote competition in the provision of services, and protect and promote the interests of consumers. Following the conclusion of the study, we will review the findings and publish a report.

We carry out regular compliance checks of our transparency rules and we plan to consider appropriate next steps on transparency in the light of our DCT market study and other evaluation work undertaken to date. **(2.)** Our work to look at our "association rules" which regulate how barristers interact with intermediaries which provide information about their services, is also ongoing and we expect to complete this in 2024. **(4.)**

Strategic Aim 5 – Independence

Strengthening the BSB’s independence, capability, self-confidence and credibility

What we said we would do:

We said that our aim here was to ensure that the BSB has the culture, values and associated policies appropriate for an independent regulator and that our core work would focus on:

1. our periodic review of our implementation of the Internal Governance Rules, which govern the relationship between regulators and professional bodies, with the aim of enhancing regulatory independence within the current legislative framework. We want to ensure that our arrangements can continue to guarantee our independence and that we do not duplicate the work of the Bar Council.
2. continuing to pursue the governance reforms in our Well Led Action Plan and in our action plan in response to the LSB’s Regulatory Performance Review; and
3. promoting engagement and collaboration with consumer organisations, the profession and other regulators.

We said that our project work would focus on continuing to:

4. implement the reward system reforms for our people;
5. examine and implement measures to promote wellbeing;
6. promote diversity and inclusion at the BSB; and
7. ensure that the BSB’s values (of fairness and respect, independence and integrity, excellence and efficiency) guide all our activities.

What we did:

We completed our review of how the current Internal Governance rules are working **(1.)** and we continued to pursue the governance reforms in our Well Led Action Plan and in our action plan in response to the Legal Services Board's (LSB) Regulatory Performance Review. **(2.)** We made good progress in implementing the reforms set out in the Action Plan and our Business Plan for 2024-25 includes further reforms which we intend to make in order to promote continuous improvement in both our performance and our governance. We continued to engage with all our stakeholders in our work regularly consulting consumer groups, our fellow regulators and the profession **(3.)**. We hired a new Stakeholder Engagement Officer to take forward this work in 2024.

In 2023, we launch a revised recognition scheme, aiming to acknowledge those who exemplify our values or deliver marked improvements in our work, and are also working on a revised performance management system, to support us in ensuring that we are all guided by the BSB's values in our work. **(4&7.)** We continued to implement the reforms we made to our reward system in response to the difficulties we experienced in recruiting new people for legal and policy roles. **(4.)** Within the people team, we hired a Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Manager to ensure we explore ways to promote staff wellbeing as well as diversity and inclusion. **(5&6.)** As part of the programme, which is aimed at embedding our values and behaviours to deliver a culture of continuous improvement, our 2023/24 organisational learning plan was implemented. We have also consulted with staff to develop a vision statement, encapsulating our values and defining our culture and we are in the process of finalising the statement. **(8.)** To ensure that the Board itself exemplifies and demonstrates the values of the BSB, its members receive regular equality and diversity training and annual reviews of its governance are carried out, including an independent external review in 2024. **(8.)**

Our teams and their work

Our Board

(See “Our governance” section on page 25)

BSB Director General

Mark Neale

Regulatory Operations

Interim Director: Saima Hirji, 36 people | Receipt and assessment of all incoming information | Authorisations

Standards

Director: Rupika Madhura, 19 people | Supervision and Qualifications, management of the centralised examinations function.

Strategy and Policy

Director: Ewen MacLeod, 16 people | Policy development | Regulatory risk | Equality and access to justice | Research

Legal and Enforcement

Director: Sara Jagger, 23 people | Investigations of potential breaches of the BSB Handbook/ Enforcement and disciplinary action/ legal advice and support including litigation support

Communications and Public Engagement

Director: Wilf White, 4 people | External and internal communications | Public and stakeholder engagement

BSB People

Director: Teresa Haskins, 4 people | People strategy and support | Culture and Values | Learning and Development

Two further teams report directly to the Director General:

- **Governance and Corporate Services** led by *Rebecca Forbes with 5 people*
- **Programme Management** led by *Michael Farmer with 3 people*

We also share the following support services with the Bar Council: Facilities, Finance, Information Services, Records, the Project Management Office, and those centralised Human Resources services not provided by the dedicated BSB function.

What our teams do

Regulatory Operations

The Regulatory Operations Department is responsible for the receipt and assessment of all incoming information into the BSB, dealing with enquiries about the BSB and its activities, all authorisation activity, including the authorisation of new AETOs and new business entities and the consideration of applications for waivers from the practising requirements for barristers.

Standards

The Department oversees the training that must be completed in order to qualify as a barrister and sets and marks centralised examinations for prospective barristers. It also decides on individual applications from people wishing to qualify and/ or practise as barristers but who would like to be exempted from some or all of the normal training requirements.

Its aim is to assure, maintain and enhance standards across the profession through the development of measures for assessing the adherence to the standards set out in the BSB Handbook of both the individuals we regulate and the chambers or entities in which they practise. This includes a risk-based approach to supervision, and the regulation of Continuing Professional Development.

Strategy and Policy

Our Strategy and Policy Department is responsible for collecting evidence about the effectiveness of our rules and policies, assessing regulatory risk, and, where necessary, changing existing rules or introducing new ones.

The Department gathers evidence about what is happening in the market and the impact that our actions are having by conducting research (either by itself or with others) and by collaborating with stakeholders who have an interest in our work. Where necessary, it uses this knowledge to set or revise standards and introduce rules and guidance for barristers and entities. These rules are contained in the BSB Handbook. It develops policy on the educational pathways into the profession, and on the conduct of practice in areas

such as chambers' complaints handling and direct public access to barristers. Another important area is equality and diversity, where the Department is responsible for setting and seeking to achieve the objectives within our Equality Strategy.

Legal and Enforcement

Our Legal and Enforcement Department is responsible for ensuring that the professional obligations set out in the BSB Handbook are complied with and, if necessary, taking enforcement action where those obligations have not been met. The Legal Support Team is responsible for providing or sourcing legal advice to assist those in regulatory decision-making roles, overseeing claims arising from regulatory decision-making, developing the annual legal training programme as well as for legal knowledge management.

The Department carries out investigations of potential breaches of the Handbook. Where an investigation reveals sufficient evidence, and the conduct poses a risk to the Regulatory Objectives, enforcement action will be taken in accordance with the processes described on our [website](#).

Decisions on what action, if any, to take can be made by staff and the BSB's Independent Decision-Making Body. Staff decision-making is limited to dismissing allegations or imposing non-disciplinary administration warnings or fines (up to £1,000 for individual barristers).

Our Independent Decision-making Body, sitting as five person lay majority panels, has wider powers: they can also refer cases of professional misconduct to a Disciplinary Tribunal and have the power to decide less serious charges of professional misconduct, with the barrister's consent, under the Determination by Consent procedure.

The Department is responsible for preparing and presenting charges of professional misconduct to independent tribunals, convened and administered by an independent organisation called the Bar Tribunals and Adjudication Service (BTAS). In doing so, the BSB is assisted by our [Tribunal Representation Panel](#) which provides representation at tribunals and other hearings. It is for the independent tribunal to decide whether the charges brought by the BSB are proven and to determine any sanction.

The Legal and Enforcement Department also deals with concerns about barristers' fitness to practise for health reasons, and with interim suspensions from practice pending conclusion of disciplinary proceedings.

Communications and Public Engagement

Our Communications and Public Engagement Department is responsible for all our internal and external communications including our publications, website, social media activity and media relations. It helps our other teams to engage with the profession and other stakeholders to make sure that we discuss our policy development plans in an open and consultative way. The Department helps make sure we fulfil our transparency and accountability functions, and our obligations to promote public legal education.

Governance and Corporate Services

The Governance and Corporate Services team supports strategic and business planning and budgeting. It coordinates performance reporting and monitoring of our corporate risks. The team ensures that we act in accordance with good governance practice, and also provides administrative support for the Chair, Vice Chair and Director General.

Programme Management

The Programme Management team provides guidance and ensures that best practice is followed in the setup, running and closure of all our major programmes and projects so that the maximum benefits can be realised. It provides project management training to officers in other teams.

BSB People

Our dedicated People team is responsible for setting and delivering our people strategy and for guiding the leadership team in defining and developing the BSB's culture as an independent regulator. It also provides a wide range of operational services to BSB managers and staff, assisted by administrative and transactional support from the Bar Council shared service.

Our governance

We are governed by a Board made up of a combination of lay people and barristers. It has five lay and five barrister members and a lay chair which gives the board a lay majority.

The Board met 7 times during 2023-24: there were 6 ordinary meetings and 1 Away Day. Selected members also attended 1 Board to Board meeting during the year with the Legal Services Board and 5 seminars which allowed Board members to explore aspects of the BSB's work in greater depth. Members of the Board also attended an Equality and Diversity training session in March 2024. Ordinary Board meetings are partly held in public and we invite members of the legal Press to attend all public sessions. Board meetings during 2023-24 continued to be hybrid meetings where some members joined online.

During 2023-24 our Board members were:

Chair: Kathryn Stone OBE

Vice-Chair: Mr Andrew Mitchell KC

Barrister members: Mr Jeff Chapman KC
Mr Simon Lewis
Ms Irena Sabic KC
Professor Leslie Thomas KC

Lay members: Ms Gisela Abbam FRSA
Ms Alison Alden OBE
Mr Emir Feisal JP
Mr Steven Haines
Mr Stephen Thornton CBE

Accountability and how we manage risk

Under the Legal Services Act 2007, the Legal Services Board is responsible for overseeing the approved regulators for legal services in England and Wales. The approved regulator for barristers is the General Council of the Bar (GCB), which is also the representative body for the Bar.

The Act requires the separation of regulatory and representative activities, so the GCB has established the Bar Standards Board to exercise its regulatory functions independently. We have a protocol in place with the GCB to ensure that the exercise of the regulatory functions is not prejudiced by the Bar Council's representative functions.

Our Board manages its work with the help of four sub-committees:

- The **Governance, Risk and Audit Committee** (GRA) is responsible for ensuring that our corporate governance standards and internal controls are maintained. The Committee keeps all our risk management framework and internal audit arrangements under review and advises the Board accordingly. The corporate risk register is reviewed at least quarterly by our Senior Management Team and the GRA Committee. In addition, the GRA Committee conducts regular in-depth risk reviews throughout the year, and considers Internal Audit reports.
- The **Performance and Strategic Planning Committee** (PSP) oversees the development of our strategic direction and plans and advises the Board on developments to our planning and resource setting. It oversees performance against relevant service levels and considers whether financial and operational resources are properly and effectively allocated and efficiently managed across the organisation.
- The **Nomination Committee** seeks to ensure that recruitment to the Board and senior executive roles is fair, inclusive and transparent
- The **Remuneration Committee** makes recommendations to the Board on the remuneration and terms of engagement of BSB staff, its non-executive members and advisers. It also considers appeals by the Director General and his direct reports against decisions relating to dismissal, disciplinary sanction, grievance, promotion or demotion.

Our income and expenditure and Cost Transparency Metrics

The Bar Standards Board (BSB) is firmly committed to the principle of transparency and publishes financial and other transparency metrics as part of the Annual Report and Business Plan in accordance with the recommendations of the Legal Services Board's (LSB) Cost of Regulation Project. We combine our Cost Transparency Metrics, with the figures here in our annual report so that all our financial reporting can be found in one place.

We pay close attention to how we spend our money:

- Our budgets are set annually and our budget envelopes are informed by our business plans;
- The budget is divided up into departmental budgets which our Directors manage;
- Each month we receive detailed management accounts which enable us to keep a close eye on our business;
- Each quarter we think about what we might need to spend in the future and produce forecasts;
- We tightly monitor our largest area of spend which is our staffing costs;
- We make sure that our resources are directed at our key priorities; and
- Our financial performance is scrutinised by the Board and its Performance and Strategic Planning Committee (PSP).

Income

Practising Certificate Fees (PCF)

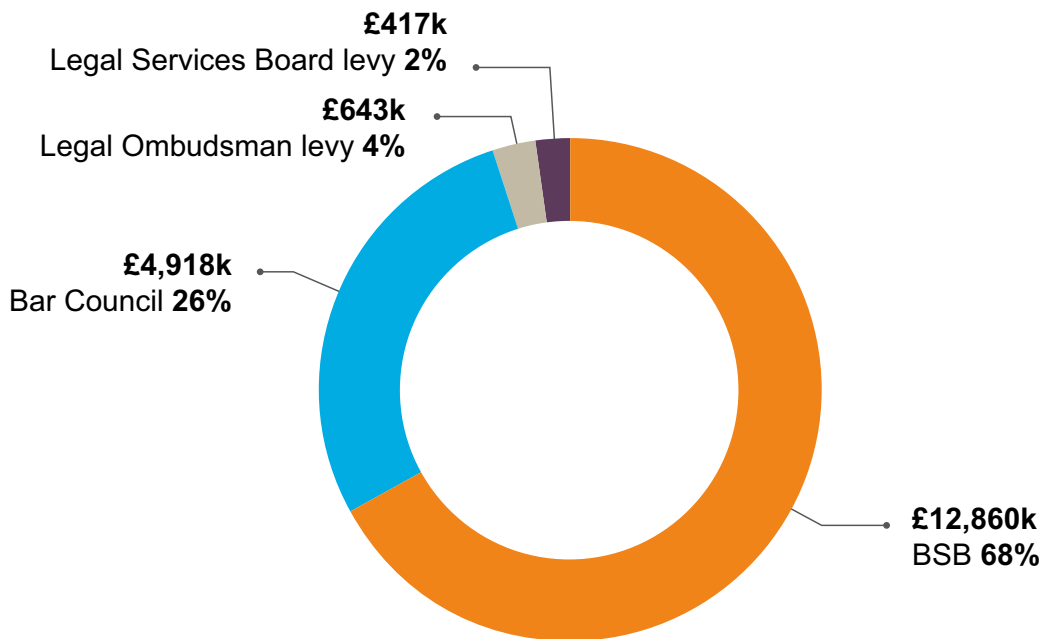
Barristers are only legally entitled to undertake reserved legal activities if they are authorised to do so by the BSB. To be authorised they must hold a current Practising Certificate renewed annually via a process known as Authorisation to Practise, which includes payment of a Practising Certificate Fee (PCF). The PCF funds the expenditure that falls within the 'permitted purposes' as defined by the Legal Services Board (LSB). The PCF is shared between the Bar Standards Board who deliver the regulatory functions, the Bar Council who deliver non-regulatory permitted activities, and levies for the Legal Services Board and the Legal Ombudsman (LeO).

Band	Thousands	Thousands
Metric	2022-23	2023-24
Total PCF Reported	£17,196	£18,838

In 2023-24 Practising Certificate Fees were set as follows:

Band	Income Band	2023-24 Fees
1	£0 - £30,000	£100
2	£30,001 - £60,000	£266
3	£60,001- £90,000	£534
4	£90,001 - £150,000	£972
5	£150,001 - £240,000	£1,476
6	£240,001 - £500,000	£2,001
7	£350,001 - £500,000	£2,138
8	£500,001 - £750,000	£2,704
9	£750,001 - £1,000,000	£2,861
10	£1,000.001 - £1,500,000	£3,245
11	£1,500,001 and above	£3,434

Allocation of PCF between Bar Council, the BSB, LSB and LeO



	2022-23	2023-24
Portion of PCF funding 'non- regulatory permitted purposes'	33%	32%
Total Permitted Purposes reserves	£3,282k	£3,744k

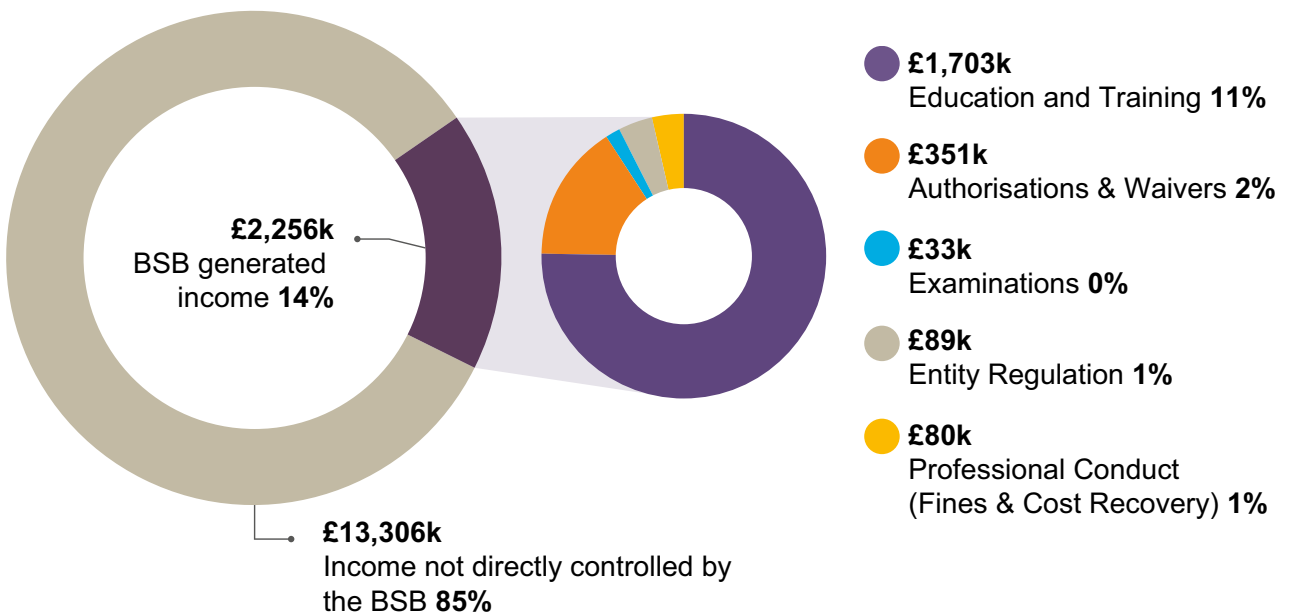
Apart from the PCF, some of our income comes from charges we make for specific services we provide to individuals and organisations. These income streams include the fees from Bar training providers, and the Bar Transfer Test.

Income Area	£ thousands 2022-23	£ thousands 2023-24
Education and Training	£1,655	£1,703
Authorisations and Waivers	£342	£351
Examinations	£175	£33
Entity Regulation	£69	£89
Professional Conduct (Fines & Cost Recovery)	£99	£80
Total BSB Generated Income	£2,340	£2,256

As with previous years, income from fees for Bar training remained the most significant proportion of the BSB controlled income during 2023-24. The forecast income for Bar training was set at £1,350,000 based upon expectations modelled on the 2020-21 (this has been updated for 24/25 to reflect the increase numbers) uptake. However, we generated an additional £353k of income as student numbers increased. Overall, the BSB exceeded its (non-PCF) income target by £457k (25%).

Total Income for the BSB	£ thousands 2022-23	£ thousands 2023-24
PCF Contributions	£11,478	£12,860
Income from GCB Resources Group	£172	£466
Planned Contributions from Reserves	0	0
Total income not directly controlled by the BSB	£11,650	£13,306
Total BSB Generated Income	£2,340	£2,256
Total regulatory income	£13,990	£15,562

BSB Income



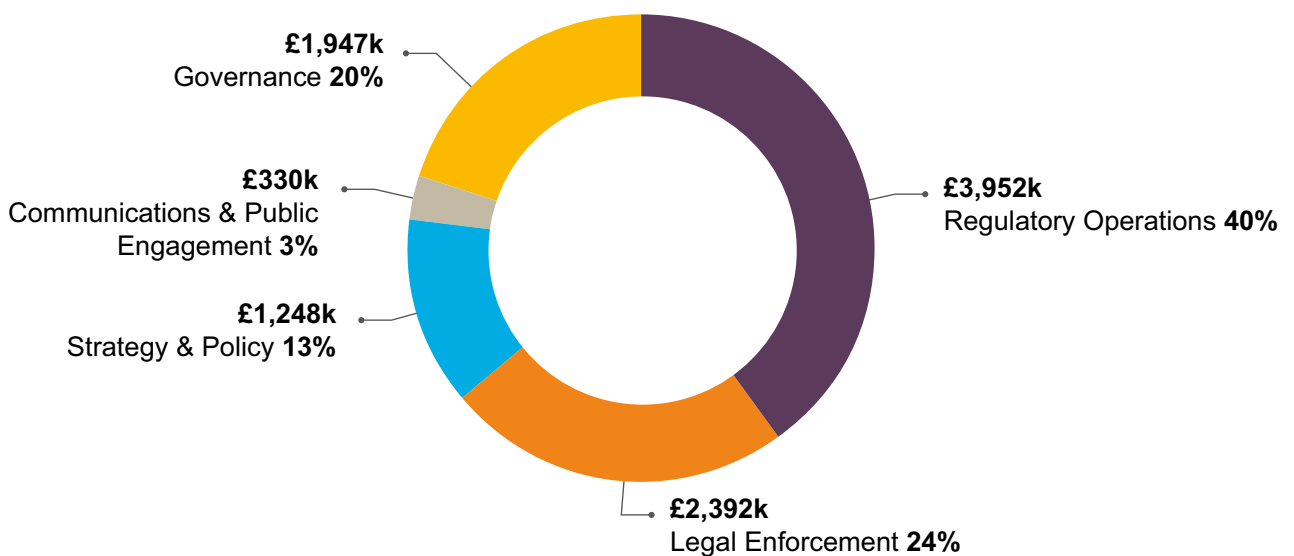
Expenditure

BSB directly controlled expenditure was £9,869k against a budget of £9,337k, a £532k (6% overspend). The reasons for this overspend were the Enforcement review, additional consultancy cost and the final phase of the recovery plan.

The full cost of regulation includes an allocation of shared costs (IT, Finance, HR and Premises costs) from the Bar Council Resources Group. The Resources Group expenditure budget is managed separately, outside the direct control of the BSB, and is apportioned to the organisation.

Department	£ thousands 2022-23	£ thousands 2023-24
Regulatory Operations	£3,381	£3,952
Legal Enforcement	£1,964	£2,392
Strategy and Policy	£916	£1,248
Communications and Public Engagement	£272	£330
Governance (including Corporate Services, Chair, HR and Programmes costs)	£1,993	£1,947
Total Direct BSB Expenditure	£8,526	£9,869
Resources Group allocation & adjustments	£5,073	£5,656
Total cost of regulation	£13,599	£15,525
Average cost of regulator for each authorised individual¹	£659	£726

Direct BSB Expenditure in 2023-24



¹ The average cost of the regulator for each authorised individual is calculated by dividing total BSB PCF income (£12,860k in 2023-24) by the number of practising barristers at 31 March 2024 (17,656).

Staff resources

	2022-23	2023-24
Headcount	104 (98.6 FTE)	114 (110.2 FTE)

Remuneration of the Board and Executive

Chair of Board total remuneration	£105,684	£116,616
Vice Chair total remuneration	£38,690	£38,796
Director General total remuneration	£157,942	£169,957

The median staff salary at the BSB in 2023-24 was £56,375, the ratio between this and the Director General (salary: £170k) was 1: 3.01. As well as the Director General, the Bar Standards Board has six Senior Managers paid in a salary band which in 2023-24 was between £84k and £115k.

Staff costs	£5,693,210	£6,594,308
Board costs	£221,107	£247,529

Overall staff related costs were £7,312k (3% overspent). We ended the year with staff turnover of 14%. Any salary savings achieved from vacancies were offset by recruitment related expenses and temporary cover for business critical roles.

Board Remuneration and Expenses in 2023-24

Name	Salary / Fees	Pension	Allowance	Total	Expenses incurred in relation to BSB business
Kathryn Stone OBE	£116,616	£0	£0	£116,616	£102
Mr Andrew Mitchell KC	£38,796	£0	£0	£38,796	£0
Ms Gisela Abbam	£9,240	£0	£0	£9,240	£0
Ms Alison Allden OBE	£9,240	£0	£0	£9,240	£0
Mr Jeff Chapman KC	£9,240	£0	£0	£9,240	£0
Mr Steven Haines	£13,860	£0	£0	£13,860	£0
Mr Simon Lewis	£9,240	£0	£0	£9,240	£0
Ms Irena Sabic KC	£9,240	£0	£0	£9,240	£0
Mr Emir Feisal JP	£9,240	£0	£0	£9,240	£0
Professor Leslie Thomas KC	£9,240	£0	£0	£9,240	£0
Mr Stephen Thornton CBE	£13,475	£0	£0	£13,475	£0

Non-staff costs

Total non-staff expenditure was £2,557k (a £333k overspend).

Further reading

To obtain a fuller picture of who we are, what we do, and the context in which this Annual Report was produced, please visit the following pages on our website:

- This Annual Report is designed to be read in conjunction with our [Business Plan for 2023-24](#) and our [2022-25 Strategic Plan](#).
- More information about our work around [equality and diversity](#) can be found there.
- Our [organisational values](#) describe the way in which we conduct all our work including the activities described in this Plan.

BAR
STANDARDS
BOARD

REGULATING BARRISTERS

Contacting us

We are committed to providing a high standard of service and dealing with everyone in a way that is fair, transparent, and proportionate. We welcome your feedback on our services, particularly where the level of service has exceeded or fallen below your expectations.

Your comments and suggestions are important to us as they will help us to meet our obligations to you and to improve our performance.

Contact us:

Bar Standards Board
289-293 High Holborn
London
WC1V 7HZ

Tel: 020 7611 1444

Email: ContactUs@BarStandardsBoard.org.uk

Twitter: [@BarStandards](https://twitter.com/BarStandards)

Youtube: [/barstandardsboard](https://www.youtube.com/barstandardsboard)

LinkedIn: [/thebarstandardsboard](https://www.linkedin.com/company/thebarstandardsboard)

Bar Standards Board – Director General’s Strategic Update – 25 July 2024**For publication****Enforcement Review recommendations – Independent Decision-Making Body (IDB)**

1. The Board will recall that at its meeting on 11 April 2024 it received an executive response to the recommendations made in Fieldfisher’s Report of the Enforcement Review. The executive supported the acceptance of all the recommendations except those in relation to the IDB where the view was the IDB should determine whether to accept the recommendations relevant to its operation.
2. The IDB subsequently met at a special online meeting on 4 July 2024 to discuss the recommendations set out at part 4, section 7 of the Fieldfisher Report. The IDB agreed that all five recommendations should be accepted and taken forward by a working group of the IDB and relevant staff.

Equality Rules consultation

3. We expect to launch our consultation this month on the revision of our *Equality Rules*. Meanwhile, Board members may wish to be reminded of the attached public blog¹ explaining why and how, regulation can play a useful role, alongside the profession itself, in addressing the cultural challenges to the achievement of a more diverse and inclusive Bar.

Bar training conference, 7 June 2024

4. Our Bar training annual conference took place last month at City University. The conference brings together Bar training and pupillage providers. There was a full agenda with a particular focus on the promotion of diversity and inclusion. Our Research and Evaluation Manager, Olly Jackling, reported on our recently published research on pupillage recruitment. This prompted an excellent and constructive discussion about how Bar training students from less advantaged backgrounds can be better prepared for the demands of pupillage interviews. There were also fascinating sessions on neuro diversity and on accent discrimination.

Chambers: access

5. As part of our continuing work on disability and access, we facilitated a constructive discussion on 11 June between the Inns of Court, the relevant planning authorities and Historic England about the challenges of improving access to the Inns’ historic buildings. There was agreement on the need to find cost-effective ways of achieving better access consistent with preserving the character of the Inns’ estate and helpful practice suggestions about the drawing up of design guidance to facilitate this.

¹ <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/resources/press-releases/the-role-of-regulation-in-promoting-diversity-or-why-the-regulator-should-not-stay-out-of-the-way.html>

Recognition awards

6. We held our inaugural recognition awards on 12 June to celebrate colleagues and teams which had exemplified our values in the last year. The awards reflected nominations from across the BSB and were decided by our People Forum. We recognised: Alex Williams (Fairness & Respect); Charlie Higgs (Independence & Integrity; and Shaheen Khan (Excellence and Efficiency). The Team award went to the Legal Support Team of Rhys Bevan, Anna McNee, Fibi Ward and Zehra Husain.

Mark Neale
Director General

Chair’s Report on Visits and External Meetings from end May 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**

4 June	Attended Chairs’ Committee
4 June	Attended the Shortlisting meeting for recruitment for a new member of the Audit Committee
5 June	Attended Bar Council meeting
11 June	Met with Michele Heeley KC, Midland Circuit Leader, Chambers, Birmingham
11 June	Presentation on Reporting Concerns at Chambers, Birmingham
18 June	Lunch meeting with Chambers re progress on the BSB consultation, <i>the Regulation of Barristers in Chambers</i> .
25 June	Panel member for Audit Committee interviews
27 June	Attended BSB Board Away-day
2 July	Attended Joint Finance Committee meeting
9 July	BSB Board Seminar TQLs
10 July	Attended Nomination Committee
10 July	Met with Annwyn Godwin, CEO Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Canberra Australia
17 July	Attended GRA Committee
15 July	Attended Briefing session with Andrew Mitchell KC and Stephen Thornton prior to meeting with LSB Board
16 July	Finance Committee Interview Panel meeting
17 July	Attended All BSB meeting
22 July	Attended Chairs’ Committee
23 July	Attended Board briefing
23 July	Attended LSB Board meeting with Andrew Mitchell KC and Stephen Thornton
24 July	Met with Lawyers Who Care re Equality Rules
25 July	Attended BSB Board meeting

1-2-1 Meetings

30 May	Call with Alan Kershaw, Chair LSB
30 May	Call with Steven Haines
3 June	Call with Emir Feisal JP
5 June	Met with Kate Lumsden KC, Gray’s Inn
17 June	Call with Gisela Abbam

17 June Call with Steven Haines
18 June Met with Alan Kershaw, Chair LSB
9 July Call with Emir Feisal JP

Events

4 June Attended the Institute of Barristers' Clerks Annual Dinner
7 June Attended Bar Training Conference held at
City Law School
12 June Attended the BSB Annual Recognition Awards
24 June Attended the ICAW Event
2 July Attended Middle Temple Garden Party
4 July Attended Lincoln's Inn Garden Party
25 July BSB Board dinner
26 July Gray's Inn Treasurers' Reception