

# Programme Specification

<b>1. Awarding institution/body</b>	The College of Law
<b>2. Teaching institution</b>	The College of Law
<b>3. Programme accredited by</b>	The General Council of the Bar
<b>4. Programme Level</b>	Honours, in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
<b>5. Final Award</b>	Diploma in Bar Vocational Studies
<b>6. Programme</b>	Bar Vocational Course (by way of full-time or part-time study)
<b>7. Date of Production/Revision</b>	September 2007

## 8. Educational aims of the programme

The College fully adopts the aims and ethos as articulated by the Bar Council in the Course Specification. Within this framework the general educational aims of The College of Law in relation to BVC students are:

- (a) to enable students to develop as independent, autonomous and reflective lawyers;
- (b) to provide students with a learner-centred educational environment;
- (c) to enable students to draw upon and enhance prior learning and personal experience;
- (d) to enable students to achieve:
  - (i) a thorough and practical understanding of civil and criminal procedure, evidence and sentencing informed, where appropriate, by current research and recent developments in legal practice;
  - (ii) an understanding of the techniques and rules underlying the core legal skills of advocacy, legal research, fact management, opinion writing, drafting, negotiation and conference skills and the ability to practise those skills at the level to be expected of a person ready for pupillage;
  - (iii) an understanding of the rules governing the professional ethics and conduct of barristers and the ability to identify potential professional ethical and conduct problems when they arise and to know how to deal with them;
- (e) to provide students with a curriculum which enables them to satisfy the requirements set by the Bar Council;
- (f) to enable students to develop a personal view of their role as future lawyers, aware of the ethical, social and political context in which they will operate, and conscious of their professional and personal responsibility as a lawyer; and
- (g) to enable students to develop transferable skills.

9. **Programme outcomes** - The programme enables students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas:

**Knowledge and understanding**

**A Knowledge and understanding of:**

Students should be able to

- demonstrate sound knowledge of principles in the knowledge areas set out in para. 10;
- perform competently in matters in which they are likely to be briefed in the second six months of pupillage;
- demonstrate knowledge of and identify the rules of professional ethics and conduct and demonstrate such an approach to practice as a barrister;
- demonstrate an awareness of the need to consider the potential impact of the Human Rights Act and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies:**

The Learning and Teaching methods are entirely student-centred. Central to the learning model are small group sessions lasting between 1 and 2 hours, as appropriate, containing 12 students. Learning outcomes for all sessions are detailed in the student materials along with the preparation requirements for the sessions. These include carrying out preparatory research, reading and tasks and completing online Test and Feedback exercises.

**Assessment:**

Assessment of knowledge is through unseen, closed book, multiple choice examinations.

**Skills and other attributes**

**B Cognitive (thinking) skills**

Analysis – be able to:

- identify relevant facts and issues;
- identify the lay client’s objectives;
- apply legal principles in an orderly way.

Problem-solving – be able to:

- identify the different means of achieving the lay client’s objectives;
- identify the steps and decisions that need to be taken to implement those objectives;
- identify any difficulties that may arise in implementing those steps and procedures.

Critical judgment and evaluation – be able to:

- make the most of the experience which follows and gain the confidence necessary for competence in practice;
- learn from the experience of the course and from future practice;
- demonstrate an awareness of the limits of their own competence and know when to ask for assistance.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies:**

Cognitive skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above. Analysis, critical judgement, evaluation and problem-solving skills are further developed through the small group exercises and feedback.

**Assessment:**

Cognitive skills are assessed through the seen and unseen knowledge and skills assessments.

Skills and other attributes cont'd

**C Practical legal skills**

**Advocacy** – be able to prepare, manage and present a case or legal argument both orally and in writing, before a court or tribunal, whether formal or informal.

**Conference** – be able to demonstrate an understanding of the objectives of a conference and the legal, factual, procedural and evidential issues that should be raised in a conference. Students should demonstrate a structured approach and effective communication with the client. Students should advise the client appropriately and clearly, explaining the legal, procedural and evidential issues involved.

**Legal Research** – be able to: identify the objectives of the client, analyse the factual material and the legal context in which the factual issues arise, identify and analyse the legal issues, apply the relevant legal provisions to the facts and record and present the results in a clear, useful and reliable form, showing a clear research trail. Students should also be able to demonstrate an understanding of the use of primary and secondary sources, methods of locating cases and statutes, the use of indices and citators and the use of electronic research tools.

**Fact management** – be able to examine the facts in detail, look at all possible interpretations, identifying which are in dispute and which are missing. Students should demonstrate how the facts can be assembled to construct a persuasive argument.

**Opinion writing** – be able to write concise, well –structured opinions in a variety of cases and should be aware of the need to adopt a practical approach to the needs and objectives of the client.

**Drafting** – should be able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the nature, function and value of pleadings and learn to draft a full range of pleadings and other documents in civil and criminal proceedings, using precedent appropriately.

**Negotiation** – should be able to demonstrate the importance of this as a means of settlement and the importance of planning, including the selection of strategies and methods that further the client’s best interests.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies:**

Practical legal skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above and in section 10.

**Assessment:**

Practical legal skills are assessed primarily through the discrete skills assessments within the course.

**D Transferable skills**

**Communication** – be able to:

- communicate points orally and in writing;
- use a style appropriate for a familiar audience;
- include appropriate referencing in written work;
- make appropriate use of IT media.

**Numeracy** – be able to:

- adapt numerical skills acquired up to degree level for use in another (legal) context.

**Teamwork** – be able to:

- work with a group to find agreed solutions to set problems;
- negotiate and accept responsibility for performing an aspect of a team task.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies:**

Transferable skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above and in section 10.

**Assessment:**

Where not formally assessed, transferable skills are assessed informally, by means of tutor evaluation of performance in small group sessions, and various forms of self-evaluation

**10. Programme structure and features**

The programme is offered in full-time (1 year) and part-time (2 years) study modes. In part-time mode, students pursue the programme by way of weekend study (one weekend every three weeks). The full-time course comprises 34 study weeks over the year including 2 consolidation weeks. In part-time modes the course has a maximum of 32 study weekends spread over the 2 year period.

The course is structured as follows:

<b>INDUCTION / FOUNDATION</b>	
Introduction to College	Introduction to course
Learning outcomes and working methods	Curriculum-related activities
Library and IT resources	Careers and career facilities
Aims and ethos	Introduction to Professional Ethics and Conduct

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AREAS (IN LITIGATION UNITS)**

The course is based around transactions or stages of litigation, which are introduced chronologically. For ease of communication these are referred to as litigation “units” although it is recognised that the litigation process is continuous rather than a series of self-contained units. The overall structure of the course is therefore driven by the litigation process, the skills being integrated in context during the litigation units.

**Criminal Litigation and Sentencing**

The first phase in unit one is from commission of crime to first court appearance. The course takes the student through to sentencing and appeals against sentence and conviction. Students should be able to understand the overall litigation process and all the intervening stages. The relevant skills, which the students should be able to demonstrate, such as advocacy, conference, opinion writing etc are integrated throughout the teaching.

**Civil Litigation**

The first phase in unit one is from pre action negotiations to issue of a claim. The course takes the student through to judgments, enforcement and appeals. Students should be able to understand the overall litigation process and all the intervening stages. The relevant skills, which the students should be able to demonstrate, such as advocacy, negotiation, opinion writing etc are integrated throughout the teaching.

**Evidence**

Evidence is introduced at appropriate points during the litigation units, but at the same time care is taken to ensure that, viewed as a whole, the evidence course has coherence and develops logically. This is essential to ensure that students should be able to demonstrate a firm grasp of the fundamental principles of evidence while also having an opportunity to encounter them in the context of the litigation process. The relevant skills, which the students should be able to demonstrate, are integrated throughout the teaching.

## 10. Programme structure and features cont'd

### PERVASIVE AREAS

#### Professional Ethics and Conduct

On completion of the programme students will be able to identify and advise the client on matters of Professional Conduct and Ethics which arise during practice as a barrister.

#### Human Rights

Students will be expected to be able to identify human rights issues wherever they arise in the course. Students will also be expected to assess the likely implications of any human rights issues for any course of action that is being proposed in any part of the litigation process.

### OPTION AREAS

Students must additionally study **TWO** Option subjects chosen from a broad range of at least 6. The Options build upon the development of the skills delivered in the core of the course and these are taught in the vocational style, over no less than 16 hours. At least 50% of each option is directed to the practice of skills. The College currently offers a choice of 9: Pro Bono (a clinical option), Advanced Criminal Practice, Advanced Civil Practice, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Family Practice, International Commercial Practice, Immigration Practice, Judicial Review Practice and Tribunals Practice. The assessment of each option includes, but is not limited to, a skills exercise of sufficient scope to draw upon the range of specialist knowledge development by the student during the option.

## 11. Credit Schedule

	Level	Credit
Civil (including FC and CV)	H	20
Criminal (including FC and CV)	H	20
Opinion Writing	H	5
Negotiation	H	10
Drafting	H	15
Conference	H	10
Advocacy	M	40
Evidence	H	10
Option 1	M	10
Option 2	M	10
Total		150

