

# Qualifying as a Barrister after the LPC



BPP CAREERS SERVICE

March 2007

## Qualifying as a barrister after the LPC

Certain categories of qualified legal practitioners are eligible to apply to the Qualifications Committee for Call to the Bar without complying with all of the usual requirements, which include taking an Aptitude Test and undertaking a period of pupillage.

One of these categories is qualified solicitors.

### Qualified Solicitors

Anyone admitted to the Roll of Solicitors who intends to practise as a barrister is eligible to apply for transfer to the Bar.

If approved:

- Solicitors with higher court rights in both civil and criminal proceedings are automatically exempt from the Aptitude Test and all pupillage.
- Solicitors with higher court rights in either civil or criminal proceedings are exempt from the Aptitude Test, but may have to do a reduced pupillage.
- Other solicitor applicants may have to pass the oral sections (but not the written sections) of the Aptitude Test and undertake a period of pupillage.

### LPC Students

LPC students who wish to transfer to the Bar but who have not yet completed their training contract would not be eligible to apply for transfer to the Bar. They would need to undertake the Bar Vocational Course (BVC) in full.

Careers Service Contact Details: [lawcareers@bpp.com](mailto:lawcareers@bpp.com)

0207 430 5306 or 0207 633 4539

# Qualifying as a Solicitor after the BVC



BPP CAREERS SERVICE

March 2007

Students who decide that they want to qualify as a solicitor after completing the Bar Vocational Course (BVC) are required to:

- pass selected subject areas of the Qualified Lawyers Transfer Test (QLTT); and
- meet a two-year experience requirement set down by the Law Society.

The subject areas of the QLTT that students must pass are: Professional Conduct & Accounts.

## Certificate of eligibility

Before undertaking the QLTT, students must apply to the Law Society for a certificate of eligibility to take the test. Application is made using the prescribed application form, which must be sent to the Law Society with a fee of £400 and the documentation required.

The certificate of eligibility is valid for three years until the expiry date shown on it. Students that do not pass the required heads of the QLTT within the three year time period will be required to submit a new application along with fresh documentation and the current fee.

The application process can take approximately eight weeks to complete.

## Experience requirement

In order to be eligible to take the QLTT, applicants are required to satisfy the Law Society that they have gained two years of common law experience within the past five years. Such experience

- must have been undertaken in **three** areas of common law; and
- must have covered contentious and non-contentious areas of practice.

Only experience **after** passing the BVC counts.

When submitting an application to transfer, applicants should provide evidence of any experience they wish to have taken into account, by way of letter(s) from their supervisor, employer, partner, pupil master or head of chambers. Details of the dates of employment, together with the nature of duties undertaken and areas of law in which experience has been gained, should be included.

The following types of post-call experience may be counted:

- Up to 12 months' pupillage certified as satisfactory by the pupil master or Bar Council
- Any period spent in practice at the Bar (ie tenancy or squatting)

Any period spent in legal employment with

– the Crown Prosecution Service or the Magistrates' Court Service  
– the Civil Service, local government, a public authority, commerce or industry (provided in a legal department headed by a solicitor or barrister qualified in England and Wales of at least five years standing)

- Experience gained overseas (if gained in a common law jurisdiction)

- Employment consistent with service under a training contract for a two year period can satisfy the experience requirement.

## Applying for training contracts

BVC students can apply to solicitors' firms for training contracts in the usual way.

As a BVC student, you would not strictly speaking be a 'trainee solicitor' during your two year training, but in effect you can undertake a training contract in the same way as LPC students.

This two year period would fulfil the Law Society's experience requirement, and you would then apply to take the QLTT in order to transfer from being a barrister to being a qualified solicitor.

Many of the larger City firms, particularly those with strong litigation practices, are likely to welcome applications from BVC students since they will value the advocacy and negotiation skills gained during the BVC.

Some firms state clearly on their website that they welcome application from BVC students. See below for some sample comments from magic circle firms;

*Slaughter & May:*

'We are keen to receive applications from anyone who has completed the Bar Vocational Course and meets our general criteria.

To enable you to gain a thorough understanding of our practice, we ask you to enter into a two-year quasi-training contract, whether you are a newly-qualified barrister or have already practised at the Bar for up to three years. More senior barristers should apply for an Associate position. You will follow the same training as any other trainee except that you will also have to pass the Qualified Lawyers' Transfer Test (QLTT). All barristers are required by The Law Society to sit the QLTT before qualifying as solicitors in England and Wales. We would expect you to pass the test during the two-year period.'

*Allen & Overy:*

'If you apply to us during or immediately after completing the BVC then you could join Allen & Overy on a quasi training contract. You would spend two years doing the rotational training contract and would sit the QLTT during this time. You would not have to do the LPC. You should apply using the application form.'

## Admission to the roll of solicitors

After students have passed the relevant heads of the QLTT (having fulfilled the two year experience requirement) the final stage of the process is to apply to the Law Society for admission to the roll of solicitors (for which there is a further fee of £100).

## Further information

Please go to the Law Society's website for further information, where you can also access the application form for a certificate of eligibility to take the QLTT: [www.lawsociety.org.uk/becomingasolicitor/outsideengandwales/transfertest.law](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/becomingasolicitor/outsideengandwales/transfertest.law)

Careers Service Contact Details:

[lawcareers@bpp.com](mailto:lawcareers@bpp.com)

0207 430 5306 or 0207 633 4539