

Is Bar training right for you?

A career at the Bar can be intellectually challenging, professionally rewarding and personally fulfilling. Barristers play a vital role in representing clients, advancing the rule of law and shaping outcomes that affect individuals, businesses and society.

Bar training requires a significant investment of time, effort and money, and progression to pupillage is highly competitive. Before applying, it is important to take time to consider whether this is the right path for you and to make an informed decision based on your interests, strengths, circumstances and career aspirations.

At the University of Hertfordshire, we are committed to widening access to the Bar and supporting aspiring barristers from all backgrounds to achieve their ambitions. There are some professional behaviours and attitudes that we look for in prospective Bar students:

- Do you enjoy intellectual challenge and problem-solving?
- Can you work effectively under pressure?
- Are you determined and self-motivated?
- Do you have stamina, resilience and persistence?
- Can you communicate clearly and persuasively, both in writing and orally?
- Are you prepared to continue developing your skills through feedback and reflection?

How competitive is pupillage?

Applicants should be aware that securing pupillage is highly competitive. On average, around 2300 students enrol on Bar training courses in England and Wales (academic years 2020/21 to 2023/24). The Bar Standards Board latest Annual Bar Training Report (Jan 2025) shows that for the 2020/21 cohort, 46% of UK-domiciled students who successfully completed Bar training had secured pupillage by November 2024. Success rates vary significantly according to factors such as academic attainment. [Bar Training Data & Trends \(Vocational Stage\) | Bar Standards Board](#)

Pupillage is awarded on merit, and many successful applicants secure pupillage through persistence, careful preparation and the development of strong academic and professional profile.

What should you consider before pursuing a career at the Bar?

Prospective students should carefully consider:

- The costs associated with Bar training.
- The competitive nature of progression to pupillage.
- Their academic record and experience to date.
- Their personal circumstances and career goals.
- The Bar Practice programme and provider that best suits their needs.

We encourage all applicants to use the admissions and interview process as an opportunity to discuss their individual circumstances, ask questions and seek advice. Our course team can help you

understand the demands of the programme, the realities of the profession and the steps you can take to maximise success. We recommend that you:

- Seek guidance from the training provider.
- Consider whether you may be eligible for scholarships or financial support.
- Speak to one of the Inns of Court.
- Research the profession through the Bar Standards Board and Bar Council websites.
- Review published data on Bar training outcomes and progression to pupillage.
- Gain relevant work experience where possible, including court visits, mini-pupillages, marshalling or other legal work experience opportunities.

Further information is available from:

The Bar Standards Board [Becoming a barrister: an overview](#)

[Bar Training Data & Trends \(Vocational Stage\) | Bar Standards Board](#)

[The Bar Council](#)

The Inns of Court websites