



The Council
of the Inns
of Court

Qualifying Sessions External Observer Handbook

2020/21 Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Quality is vital to the Inns' educational provision. The Qualifying Session (QS) is the vehicle by which the Inns deliver the bulk of their training to student Barristers. It has developed over many years into something at which high quality education is delivered in a context where those learning are exposed to the Inns' community of practitioners and external experts thereby reinforcing that learning.

Further to the Bar Standards Board (BSB) review into all stages of qualification for the Bar it has been agreed that the input of External Observers (EOs) will be a requirement. This input will be part of the quality assurance mechanism put in place for the delivery of Qs and as such has been included in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Inns and the BSB.

This handbook sets out the framework within which you will operate as an EO along with information which will assist you in the task. It will be accompanied by Inn-specific information which will be provided by the Inn to which you are assigned.

Regulatory Documentation

The following documentation can be found here.

- Inns of Court Qualifying Session Quality Assurance Operational Guidance – Annex 1
- The Joint Inns Education and Qualification Rules – Annex 2

Links to the following documentation can be found here.

- [Memorandum of Understanding between the Inns and the BSB \(MOU\) and its annexes](#)
- [BSB Handbook](#)
- [Bar Qualification Manual](#)

Role Description and Person Specification

Enclosed at Annex 3 are the role description and person specification which were used for the EO recruitment exercise and which set out the responsibilities for the role.

QS Attendance Assessment Forms

Enclosed at Annex 4 is a pro forma assessment form for use when attending and observing Qs. The form used by your Inn may look slightly different to this, not least because it may well be provided for you on-line, but the content will be mostly the same across the Inns. The completed assessment form should be sent to the nominated person at the Inn to which you are assigned within 10 working days of your attending the QS event. Prior to attendance at each QS you will be provided with the Description for the specific QS which will include its learning outcomes.

Student Meeting

To aid transparency students will be informed that the Inns have EOs assisting them. EOs will, in the last term of each academic year, chair a meeting with a group of current Bar course students; the aim being to identify whether the expectations the students had at the start of their Bar course regarding Qs were met and also to gather general feedback regarding their experiences. The feedback obtained through this meeting will be reviewed alongside that obtained from students after individual Qs. You will be required to feed back to the Inn's education staff after the meeting using the form provided at Annex 5. The meeting will be arranged by Inn staff. Students should be advised that names will not be attributed to any specific feedback given. The broad headings set out in the form at Annex 5 should be used in the production of the agenda for the meeting.

Annual Report

You will be required to submit a report to the Inn by the end of June annually, giving an overview of the year, using the form enclosed at Annex 6. These reports will be shared between the Inns and COIC and will be included in the annual Inn's Self-evaluation Report. An overview of the four Inns' reports will be produced each year by COIC and this, along with the individual Inn reports, will be submitted to the BSB. We expect the BSB will publish the Self-evaluation Reports on their website.

Serious Concerns

Eos should use their judgment and discretion to determine when they have concerns that are sufficiently serious in nature to merit raising them immediately with the nominated person at the Inn rather than including them in feedback or in the annual report.

Dialogue with the Inns & COIC

The main contact you will have during the course of your work will be the nominated person at the Inn to which you are assigned. Ordinarily they will be the person to whom you will communicate any queries or concerns you may have but in addition you can discuss matters with Joanna Robinson, Head of Quality & Standards at COIC, should it feel more appropriate in the circumstances.

Past Reports

After the first year of the EO system being in operation you will be provided with reports produced by previous EOs, previous Self-evaluation Reports and COIC overview reports which have been supplied to the BSB.

Transfer to the next Inn

In advance of the end of each of the year you will be advised which Inn you will be moving on to and the necessary induction will be organised.

Expenses

The expenses policy and claim form are enclosed at Annex 7. Expenses will be refunded by the Inn to which you are assigned after each event attended on submission of the relevant form with accompanying receipts. The form used by your Inn may look different to that included here but the content will be the same across the Inns.

Fee Payment

The fees will be paid by COIC via BACS. You are required to submit invoices as indicated below.

- £600 upon completion of the induction programme;
- £600 after attendance at a residential event;
- £600 once the minimum number of QS have been observed, a meeting with students has been conducted, and all feedback reports and the annual report have been submitted.

Inter-Inn Data Sharing Protocol

The detail of information that is shared between the Inns will be set out in a data sharing protocol.

This document is currently in development.



The Council
of the Inns
of Court

Qualifying Sessions Quality Assurance – Operational Guidance

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the quality assurance mechanism that the Inns have put in place in relation to the delivery of Qualifying Sessions (Qs). It puts into effect the principles set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Inns & COIC and the Bar Standards Board (BSB) and its annexes as referred to in the Joint Inns' Education and Qualification Rules.

The Inns will individually plan their QS programmes in accordance with the Qualifying Session Framework and will ensure there is a variety of content and mode of delivery and that a proportion of Qs are delivered outside of London. All QS events, including those delivered in collaboration with others, will be required to comply with this QA mechanism. Each QS event will have clear learning outcomes which those observing will be asked to assure against when providing feedback. The feedback received will assist the Inns in their ongoing review of their QS programmes and will also feed into the annual Self-evaluation Report provided to the BSB.

The mechanism in place at the Inns for the Quality Assurance of QS is made up of the following elements:

1. QS Description,
2. internal and external observation,
3. student feedback, and
4. annual Self-evaluation Report for the BSB.

1. Qualifying Session Description

A description will be given for each QS event that will include the learning outcomes for the QS event and will provide a structure within which feedback will be sought from observers and student attendees. Each Inn will have an internal mechanism whereby the description for each QS event is approved. Key to the delivery of consistently high-quality QS across the Inns are the clearly set out content and practicalities of the QS event and the expected learning outcomes for it. Guidance has been produced to assist the Inns in the drafting of these. This can be found at Annex I. The list of required description information for each QS can be found at Annex II.

2. Internal & External Observers - Feedback

Qs will be observed by both internal and external observers:

- Internal observer feedback will be sought for a cross-section of each Inn's QS events covering all themes set out in the QS Framework;
- External Observers will each observe 5 QS events each year at the Inn to which they have been assigned which will include attendance at one residential weekend event.

Observers will be provided with the descriptions for each QS event they observe. The form found at Annex III sets out the feedback which will be requested from all those carrying out observation of Qs. The aim is to generate feedback which is similar in format across the Inns to enable Inns to write standard format annual Self-evaluation Reports (see 4. below). Inns are permitted to ask additional questions of observers if they wish.

In addition to providing feedback on specific QS events the External Observers will once each year meet with a group of students in order to explore whether their expectations of the QS programme were met.

External observers will produce annual reports of their findings in June each year.

The Role Description and Person Specification for external observers can be found at Annex V. This, together with the External Observer Handbook, sets out how the role of external observer will operate.

3. Students - Feedback

Student feedback will be sought for a cross-section of each Inn's QS events covering all themes set out in the QS Framework. The form at Annex IV sets out the core feedback questions which will be asked of students attending QS at all Inns. Inns may ask additional questions of students if they wish.

As with feedback sought from external and internal observers student feedback will be taken into account in the annual Self-evaluation Report.

4. Annual Self-evaluation Report

Each Inn will gather the feedback obtained regarding their Qs, will review it along with any complaints received and will decide any necessary action (or if no action is required). This review work will feed into the annual Self-evaluation Report which will be produced by each Inn and which will form part of an overall Inns' report which will be submitted to the BSB.

The annual Self-evaluation Reports must include the information required in Schedule 4 of the MOU ie. the 'Assurance Framework'. Information must be provided under the following headings:

- How many students participated and completed the Qualifying Session requirements in the period of the review?
- Analyse how you have administered your responsibilities set out in the MOU in line with the four principles of Bar Training, and in particular review both how you have ensured regional availability of Qs and the requirement to undertake a minimum number of Qs in each theme;
- Highlight any challenges and analyse any changes and trends;
- Analyse how you have used quality assurance processes to identify and monitor concerns, deal with waiver applications and identify good practice and quality enhancement.

In addition Inns are required to consider any risks which might exist to the attainment of the four principles of Bar Training and where risks are identified to set out mitigating actions, the desired outcomes of these actions along with timeframes for completion.

The Inns are also required to highlight changes which have been made since the last evaluation along with the reasons for the change and the impact of it along with changes which are planned before the next evaluation is undertaken.

The Inns will receive annual reports from the External Observers in June each year. This will enable them to produce their individual Self-evaluation Reports which will be supplied to COIC by the end of December. COIC will then put together a collective report which will be supplied to the BSB by the end of February. The first of these reports will be supplied to the BSB in 2022.

Review

The QS quality assurance mechanism will be periodically reviewed to ensure it works effectively.

ANNEX I - GUIDE TO WRITING LEARNING OUTCOMES

There is a difference between the Description for a QS and its Learning Outcomes.

The QS Description will cover several things including what, how, who, how long, where, when and why. The Learning Outcome will cover just one thing ie. what will the student be able to do after the QS?

Learning Outcomes should:

- be very specific;
- be small in number for each QS;
- be easily assessed and
- need to say what the student will be able to do at the end in the specific categories of learning as set out below:
 - Knowledge or understanding
 - Application (of knowledge/understanding)
 - Analysis or Synthesis
 - Evaluation

The table below makes suggestions of verbs to use when describing what the student will be able to do, in the specific categories of learning, after attendance at the QS.

Learning Outcomes	Verbs
Acquire knowledge and understanding	Define, classify, describe, explain, identify, recognize
Apply knowledge	Demonstrate, apply, illustrate, practice
Analyse or Synthesise	Distinguish, compare, examine, critique, analyse, criticise Plan, construct, formulate, assemble
Evaluate	Appraise, assess, estimate, select, argue, evaluate

Verbs such as the following should be avoided when setting Learning Outcomes as they are not easily observable or measurable.

- Know
- learn
- appreciate
- believe
- be familiar with
- comprehend

Learning Outcomes must not be general, broad or vague, they must not be aspirational (aspirations belong in the QS Programme Aims & Objectives) and should not refer to the Professional Statement or the 5 QS themes (this information belongs in QS Descriptions and the QS Programme Aims & Objectives). The overarching purpose of QS is very important but it belongs within the Aims & Objectives of the QS Programme as a whole. The induction of students into the professional community is an overriding aim of the whole QS programme but it cannot be a learning outcome of individual QS.

The following table provides examples of learning outcomes which fit with specific types of QS.

Qualifying Sessions Type	Skills Acquired ie. the Learning Outcomes will cover these types of learning
<p>Lectures and panel discussions where students observe others saying or doing things.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These will have limited Learning Outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire knowledge & understanding • Application (possibly) • Analysis or Synthesis (probably not) • Evaluation (probably not)
<p>Practical exercises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eg. advocacy weekends, or any type of activities where the STUDENT gets hands-on skills practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire knowledge & understanding • Application • Analysis or Synthesis • Evaluation (possibly)

Learning Outcomes are useful for a range of audiences. The main recipients are of course the students but they will also be of use to the speakers and tutors as they will help them be better informed as to what is expected. They are also of use to the Inns and COIC in quality assurance terms as they make it easier to ascertain if a QS has delivered what was intended which in turn facilitates accurate reporting to the BSB.

ANNEX II - QS DESCRIPTION - INFORMATION

Information to be recorded prior to each Qualifying Session, provided to internal and external observers and used to provide a structure within which feedback will be sought from students who are planning and booking QS.

Content:	
1.	Title of QS
2.	Format of QS: [tick boxes] Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel Session • Interactive seminar • Skills Workshop • Guided Discussion • Moot • Debate • Other competition • Acting as volunteer witness/advocate • Multi-activity event eg. residential weekend or Education Day (to be split into elements). • Other: please specify.
3.	What will happen at the QS.
4.	Learning Outcome/s
5.	QS Framework Theme/s [tick boxes] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics, Standards & Values • Advocacy Skills • Legal Knowledge, Justice & The Rule of Law • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion • Management of Pupillage, Career Development & Wellbeing
6.	The element/s of the Professional Statement or other public interest matter that the QS is aligned to.
7.	Length of QS.
8.	Number of QSs the event will count for.
9.	Whether the QS is interactive. [tick boxes] Yes/No
10.	Whether there is a requirement for students to prepare in advance. [tick boxes] Yes/No If yes what preparation is required.
Practicalities:	
11.	Date of QS

12.	Tutors or speakers (in the case of large or multi-activity events the Lead Tutors should be listed along with the number who are supporting).
13.	Venue
14.	Number of student places available.
15.	Interaction with Community of Practitioners. [tick boxes] Yes/No
16.	Materials
17.	Cost

ANNEX III - COMMON OBSERVER FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

To be read in conjunction with the Description information for each QS.

Once completed please forward this form to _____.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Content:						
1.	The title of the QS gave a clear indication of the content.					
2.	The format identified was used.					
3	The description of what was due to happen was followed in the QS.					
4	The QS provided the opportunity for the set learning outcomes to be met.					
5.	The correct QS Framework themes were identified.					
6.	The Professional Statement or other public interest matters were correctly identified.					
7.	The planned timings were adhered to.					
8.	The number of QS which the event counted for was appropriate given the content.					
9.	Where the QS was interactive it included opportunities for all to interact.					

10	If required it was apparent that the students had prepared.					
Practicalities:						
11.	The tutors' delivery was well structured, clear and engaged the attendees.					
12.	There were no practical problems with the venue, equipment etc.					
13.	The number of students attending did not exceed the planned places available.					
14.	There was opportunity for delegates to interact with practitioners.					
15.	The materials supported the intended learning outcomes.					
16.	The cost of the event was appropriate.					
General:						
17.	The content of the QS was set at a level that attendees appeared to be able to engage with.					
18.	The QS succeeded in achieving an environment conducive to learning.					
19.	Are there ways in which the QS could be improved? <i>Please provide your thoughts in the space opposite.</i>					
20.	Did you observe any examples of particularly good practice?					

	<i>Please provide your thoughts in the space opposite.</i>	
<p>Please use this space to comment on any aspect of the QS you attended. If you disagreed with any of the statements above it would be helpful to have some further information.</p>		

Observer Name (capitals please): _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Office use only:

Inn's Response	Date:

ANNEX IV - COMMON STUDENT FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

Drafting note – the platform which is used to distribute the survey forms will include a link to the description information which was provided for students at the point of booking. This will include the title, a description of the event and the learning outcomes for it.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. There will be an opportunity for you to comment further at the bottom of this form.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The title of the QS gave a clear indication of the content.					
The QS followed the description of what was scheduled to happen.					
The environment was conducive to learning.					
The QS gave the opportunity for me to engage with practitioners and/or experts.					
Please indicate your feeling about the level at which the QS was delivered below.	Too advanced for me	About right for me	Too low for me		
Please choose one of the following.					
<i>Wording will be inserted below which relates specifically to the learning outcomes that have been set for each QS.</i>					
Please indicate to which extent, having attended this QS, you agree with the following statements.	To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	
<p>Please use this space to comment on any aspect of the QS you attended. If you disagreed with any of the statements above or if you feel that your skills or knowledge were not enhanced as a result of attending it would be helpful to have some further information.</p>					
<p>The Inn reads and considers all feedback received with a view to ensuring it provides the best experience possible for students attending QS.</p>					

ANNEX V - ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR EXTERNAL OBSERVER

External Observers (EOs) are appointed by the Council of the Inns of Court (COIC) on behalf of the four Inns of Court (the Inns). EOs will provide constructive feedback regarding the provision of Qualifying Sessions (QS) with a view to identifying areas of best practice and areas for improvement. Feedback will form part of the Inns' annual 'Self-evaluation Report' which will be submitted to the Bar Standards Board (BSB).

The Inns of Court and Qualifying Sessions

QS form a vital part of a student's journey in training to become a barrister. All students who undertake vocational training for the Bar are required to be members of an Inn. QS, which take place alongside a student's vocational training, provide opportunities for professional and ethical development which complements and builds on a student's academic and vocational education and forms a bridge to the final component of Bar training; pupillage. QS also provide opportunities for a student to enhance their understanding of the role of barristers in the wider justice system and the rule of law.

The Inns believe quality to be vital to their educational provision. The QS is the mechanism by which the Inns deliver the bulk of their training to student barristers. It has developed over many years from something which was essentially a social occasion into something at which high quality education is delivered in a context where those learning are exposed to the Inns' community of practitioners and experts thereby reinforcing that learning.

The Role

EOs will be assigned to observe QS delivered by an Inn for a period of one academic year. At the end of each year EOs will rotate to observe the QS of a different Inn. The post is offered for an initial term of 3 years with possible renewal for a further 2 year term although consideration is being given to varying the length of initial appointments to produce staggered future handovers.

It is envisaged that the attendance requirement will be equivalent to 6 days over the course of each academic year. EOs will produce feedback reports after each QS event attended and an annual year-end report (templates will be provided). EOs will also meet with students to gather feedback on the QS programme as a whole.

Attendance will be required at an induction programme which will normally be held in either September or October in the first year of appointment. This initial induction programme will include sessions with all four EOs and individually with the Inn the EO is assigned to. In each subsequent year the EO will attend induction sessions at the new Inn they are assigned to.

Accountability

Accountable to: the Nominated Officer of COIC

Key Relationship: the Nominated Officer at the respective Inn

Role Description

- To be familiar with the Inn's most recent annual Self-evaluation Report, which will include previous EO annual reports and to be aware of actions taken in response to recommendations made.
- To be familiar with information provided by the Inn including the planned QS programme and learning outcomes.
- To attend a cross section of 4 QS events during each academic year as well as one weekend residential course.
- To submit a report to the Inn within 10 days of each observation.
- Towards the end of the academic cycle to chair a meeting of students; the aim being to identify whether the learning outcomes and students' expectations have been met and to gather general feedback. To report the feedback to the Inn.
- To submit by the end of June an end of year an EO annual report to the Inn. This report will inform the Self-evaluation Report which the respective Inn will submit annually to the Bar Standards Board.
- To provide feedback to COIC on the EO process.
- To meet the requirements and deadlines agreed with the Inn and to maintain open and regular communication with its nominated members of staff.

- To be aware of and be able to reference the four BSB principles underpinning Bar training and the components of the BSB Professional Statement

Person Specification

The External Observer:

- is able to demonstrate a good understanding of quality assurance mechanisms;
- has direct experience of a profession where skills training is a key element of the operational workings;
- will comply with the Inns' and COIC rules relating to data protection;
- is able to maintain independence, identify and take appropriate action in dealing with conflicts of interest and maintain confidentiality where appropriate;
- can evidence, through personal and/or professional development, an understanding of the effects of unconscious bias;
- will not hold more than one other role as an EO or external examiner during the term of office;
- is willing and able to attend QS events during the evening and over the course of weekends in locations across the country.

Remuneration

EOs will receive an annual fee of £1,800 payable in three instalments:

- £600 upon completion of the induction programme;
- £600 after attendance at a residential event;
- £600 once the minimum number of QS have been observed, a meeting with students has been conducted, and all feedback reports and the annual report have been submitted.

It is estimated that on average EOs will attend 1 day of induction, 4 evening QS, a student meeting and a 2 ½ day residential weekend. We calculate this to be the equivalent of 6 days of attendance.

All reasonable travel and subsistence costs will be met in accordance with each Inn's policies.

Ordinarily only standard class travel and budget accommodation will be reimbursed.

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The Council
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Joint Inns Education and Qualification Rules

INTRODUCTION

1. The Joint Inns' Education and Qualification Rules set out the requirements for the Inns in respect of educational and qualification matters and relate directly to, and should be read in conjunction with:

- the Memorandum of Understanding between the Inns of Court and the Bar Standards Board (BSB) (the MoU);
- the BSB Handbook Part 4 Qualification Rules;
- the Bar Qualification Manual and
- the Authorisation Framework.

Rules contained in those documents are not repeated here. The purpose of these supplementary rules is to give effect to the rules set out in the documents above.

2. Student members of an Inn are subject to these supplementary rules and the standing orders of their Inn.

3. The sharing of membership data between the Inns occurs in compliance with the data protection policies of the Inns.

ADMISSION

4. The requirements for admission to the Inns of Court are set out in the MoU, the Guidelines for determining if a person is Fit and Proper to become a practising barrister and the Bar Qualification Manual. In short applicants must:

- a) meet the academic requirements set out in paragraph 7. below and
- b) be fit and proper in accordance with schedule 1 of the MOU.

An Inn must admit an applicant who has completed all required processes, is eligible for admission and has paid any prescribed fee.

5. Inn membership must be secured prior to the start of the vocational component of Bar training. Persons wishing to apply for membership must do so at least 12 weeks prior to the start of the vocational component of their training. Where the vocational component is split into two parts membership must be applied for 12 weeks prior to the start of Part 2. Further detail regarding the different training pathways can be found in the BSB's Authorisation Framework.

6. Those undertaking an apprenticeship pathway of training for the Bar will be dealt with on a case by case basis by the BSB who will determine the date by which they must be a member of an Inn. Those in this position must apply for Inn membership no later than 12 weeks prior to this date.

7. To apply for Inn membership, an applicant must either be:

- a) studying a law degree which includes the foundations of legal knowledge and skills associated with graduate legal work as set out by the BSB; or
- b) studying on, or have been accepted onto, a course (e.g. Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL)) which includes the same knowledge and skills as set out in a) above; or
- c) have been exempted from, or have successfully completed, the academic component of training.

8. Certified copies of degree or conversion course certificates or proof of study on a degree or conversion course or the relevant waiver documentation from the BSB will be required at the point of application for admission.

9. Degree and conversion course qualifications older than 5 years are considered stale for the purposes of Inn membership and Bar qualification. Applicants with stale qualifications will need to seek advice from the BSB as to what action they will need to take to reactivate their qualifications.

Note: Law degrees started before the 2019/20 academic year are required to be Qualifying Law Degrees i.e. QLD; specific requirements can be found in the Bar Qualification Manual.

10. The fee for joining an Inn will be determined by the individual Inn and will be reviewed annually. It will be published on the Inn's website along with the cost of other activities associated with Call to the Bar.

11. Applicants must provide to their Inn a completed Admission Declaration as prescribed by the BSB. Each Inn may ask for additional information.

12. Applicants must provide certified copies of identity documentation upon application for admission. The requirements for this, and associated guidance, will be set out in the admission information on the Inns' websites.

13. Students will be required to commence the vocational component of training for the Bar within six years of admission to an Inn. Students will be required to complete the vocational component within five years of commencing the vocational component. Students not complying with this requirement will be removed from Inn membership except when there has been a successful application to the Inn for the relevant time limit/s to be extended. Consideration will be given to extending the time limits in cases where there are clear plans to commence and complete the vocational component of qualification within the BSB prescribed time limits.

14. Transferring lawyers will be required to complete all requirements for Call as set out by the BSB within 2 years of admission to an Inn. Those not complying with this requirement will be removed from Inn membership except when there has been a successful application to the Inn for the relevant time limit to be extended. Consideration will only be given to extending the time limit where there are clear plans to complete the requirements within the BSB's prescribed time limits.

15. Inns may admit members of other Inns who have been Called to the Bar (Ad Eundem members). Prior to admission the admitting Inn will seek confirmation that the applicant is a member in good standing at their Inn of Call and will require the applicant to declare that there are no previous or pending disciplinary or conduct issues against them. The admitting Inn may prescribe a fee.

QUALIFYING SESSIONS

16. The rules governing Qualifying Sessions are set out in the MoU, the Qualifying Session Framework, the BSB's Handbook Part 4 Qualification Rules and the Bar Qualification Manual.
17. The Inns shall agree a joint protocol covering the awarding of waivers and modifications for attendance at Qualifying Sessions. Applications for waivers or modifications for Qualifying Sessions must be submitted to the Inn's Nominated Officer using the form prescribed by the Inn.
18. Each Inn will produce a programme of Qualifying Sessions including those held at the Inn, those held at venues hired specifically for Inn events and those held at venues on the Circuits outside the south-east.
19. Qualifying Sessions may be offered in collaboration with one or more Inn, Circuit or other providers.
20. All Qualifying Sessions, including those delivered in collaboration with others, must fit within the Qualifying Sessions Framework and must comply with agreed quality assurance mechanisms.
21. Students may count up to 5 Qualifying Sessions attended 'on Circuit' for the purposes of Call to the Bar. Qualifying Sessions gained by attendance at Inn residential events are not classed as events 'on Circuit'. The South-Eastern circuit is not considered to be 'on circuit' for the purposes of the Qualifying Sessions Framework.
22. Students may attend more than one Qualifying Session with the same content, but the Qualifying Session will only be counted once for the purposes of Call to the Bar.

CALL TO THE BAR

23. A barrister is defined in the Legal Services Act 2007 as an individual who has been Called to the Bar by one of the Inns of Court and who has not been disbarred by one of the Inns of Court. To be Called to the Bar by an Inn a person must be a member of that Inn.

24. The rules governing Call to the Bar are set out in the MoU, the Qualifying Session Framework, the BSB's Handbook Part 4 Qualification Rules, the Guidelines for determining if a person is fit and proper to become a barrister and the Bar Qualification Manual.

25. All those to be Called from 1st July 2021 will be required to undergo a UK Standard Disclosure and Barring Service check (and where relevant) the international equivalent/s. Further details on this process can be found on the BSB website.

26. There are four official Call publication dates each year. These are as follows:

- a) Hilary Term – the second Thursday in March;
- b) Trinity Term – the fourth Thursday in July; and a second, deferred Trinity Call on the second Thursday in October; and
- c) Michaelmas Term – the fourth Thursday in November.

27. Additional Call ceremonies may be held by an Inn if, for example, the number of students to be Called exceeds the capacity of an Inn. Additional Call ceremonies will normally be held within 10 days of the prescribed Call publication date. In such circumstances, the date of the Call will then be recorded on Call certificates as that of the official Call publication date not the actual date of the additional Call ceremony.

28. Students are required to attend Call in person. A joint protocol covering the awarding of waivers of this requirement shall be agreed by the Inns. Applications must be submitted to the Inn's Nominated Officer using the form prescribed by the Inn.

29. The Inns will publish the names of all of those who are Called to the Bar.

30. The fee applicable for Call to the Bar shall be determined by the individual Inn and will be reviewed annually. It will be published on each Inn's website along with the cost of other activities associated with Call to the Bar.

31. All those Called on the same date shall rank in order of seniority from their date of admission to the Inn.

32. The rules for the awarding of temporary Call are set out in the BSB's Handbook Part 4 Qualification Rules. Each Inn's process for the awarding of temporary Call can be found on their websites. An Inn will Call a successful applicant for temporary Call as soon as is practicable.

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

33. Complaints relating to the Inns' education and qualification activities should be directed to the Inn concerned. The complaints received will be reviewed annually as part of the production of the Inns' Self-Evaluation Report for the BSB.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

34. The Inns are committed to ensuring that the promotion and advancement of equality forms an integral part of its policies and practices.

35. Each Inn will complete Equality Impact Analyses for their programmes of Qualifying Sessions.

PUBLICATION & REVIEW

36. The Inns will publish this set of rules on their websites.

37. The Inns will review the workings of this set of rules annually through meetings of the Inns' Directors of Education and COIC.

38. The Inns will individually produce an annual Self-Evaluation Report covering those areas set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Inns of Court and the BSB. The Inns will collaborate with COIC in the production of an overall Inns’ report to be submitted to the BSB.

EFFECTIVE DATE & TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

39. Subject to the transitional provisions set out in Table 1 & Table 2 below, these rules come into effect on 1 January 2020.

Table 1: Qualifying Session (QS) Transitional Arrangements	Applicable Qualifying Session Rules	Guidance Notes
a) Students starting the Bar Course* before 1 June 2020 and being Called no later than 30 June 2021.	Those QS rules that were in effect prior to 1 January 2020 apply. The QS Framework does not apply.	Note that, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 QSs must be completed; - there is no requirement to complete QSs within 5 set themes; - there is no requirement to complete 2 interactive QSs; - the event linked to Call can be counted as a QS.
b) Students starting the Bar Course* before 1 June 2020 and being called on 1 July 2021 or later.	These QS rules and the QS Framework apply save that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is no requirement to complete QSs within the set 5 themes (QS Framework para 7); 	Note that under these rules & the QS Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students are required to complete 10 QSs (QS Framework Para 6);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is no requirement to complete 2 interactive Qs (QS Framework para 7). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the event linked to Call cannot be counted as a QS (QS Framework Para 14).
c) Students starting the Bar Course* on or after 1 June 2020 who have not attended Qs prior to that point.	<p>These rules and the QS Framework apply.</p>	<p>Note that, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 Qs must be completed (QS Framework Para 6); - QS must be complete within 5 set themes (QS Framework para 7); - 2 interactive Qs must be completed (QS Framework para 7); - the event linked to Call cannot be counted as a QS (QS Framework Para 14).
d) Students starting the Bar Course* on or after 1 June 2020 who have attended Qs prior to that point	<p>These rules and the QS Framework apply save that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is no requirement to complete Qs within the set 5 themes (QS Framework para 7); - there is no requirement to complete 2 interactive Qs (QS Framework para 7). 	<p>Note that under these rules and the QS Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students are required to complete 10 Qs (QS Framework Para 6); - the event linked to Call cannot be counted as a QS (QS Framework Para 14).

e) Transferring Lawyers who are admitted to an Inn prior to 1 st September 2020.	Those QS rules that were in effect prior to 1 January 2020 apply. The QS Framework does not apply.	Note that, for example: - the Number of sessions is normally reduced to 6; and these may be completed within 3 years of qualification.
f) Transferring Lawyers who are admitted to an Inn from 1 September 2020.	These rules and the QS Framework apply.	
*‘Bar Course’ for the purpose of these transitional arrangements shall be taken to mean either the Bar Professional Training Course, or The Vocational Component of Bar Professional Training or, where The Vocational Component is split into two parts, Part 2 of The Vocational Component.		

Table 2: Criminal Record Checks Transitional Arrangements	
All those being Called, including transferring lawyers, up to and including 30 June 2021.	Criminal Record Checks are not required.
All those being Called, including transferring lawyers, 1 July 2021 or later.	Criminal Record Checks are required.



The Council
of the Inns
of Court

Role Description & Person Specification

Inns' Qualifying Session External Observer

External Observers (EOs) are appointed by the Council of the Inns of Court (COIC) on behalf of the four Inns of Court (the Inns). EOs will provide constructive feedback regarding the provision of Qualifying Sessions (QS) with a view to identifying areas of best practice and areas for improvement. Feedback will form part of the Inns' annual 'Self-evaluation Report' which will be submitted to the Bar Standards Board (BSB).

The Inns of Court and Qualifying Sessions

QS form a vital part of a student's journey in training to become a barrister. All students who undertake vocational training for the Bar are required to be members of an Inn. QS, which take place alongside a student's vocational training, provide opportunities for professional and ethical development which complements and builds on a student's academic and vocational education and forms a bridge to the final component of Bar training; pupillage. QS also provide opportunities for a student to enhance their understanding of the role of barristers in the wider justice system and the rule of law.

The Inns believe quality to be vital to their educational provision. The QS is the mechanism by which the Inns deliver the bulk of their training to student barristers. It has developed over many years from something which was essentially a social occasion into something at which high quality education is delivered in a context where those learning are exposed to the Inns' community of practitioners and experts thereby reinforcing that learning.

The Role

EOs will be assigned to observe QS delivered by an Inn for a period of one academic year. At the end of each year EOs will rotate to observe the QS of a different Inn. The post is offered for an initial term of 3 years with possible renewal for a further 2 year term although consideration is being given to varying the length of initial appointments to produce staggered future handovers.

It is envisaged that the attendance requirement will be equivalent to 6 days over the course of each academic year. EOs will produce feedback reports after each QS event attended and an annual year-end report (templates will be provided). EOs will also meet with students to gather feedback on the QS programme as a whole.

Attendance will be required at an induction programme which will normally be held in either September or October in the first year of appointment. This initial induction programme will include sessions with all four EOs and individually with the Inn the EO is assigned to. In each subsequent year the EO will attend induction sessions at the new Inn they are assigned to.

Accountability

Accountable to: the Nominated Officer of COIC

Key Relationship: the Nominated Officer at the respective Inn

Role Description

- To be familiar with the Inn's most recent annual Self-evaluation Report, which will include previous EO annual reports and to be aware of actions taken in response to recommendations made.
- To be familiar with information provided by the Inn including the planned QS programme and learning outcomes.
- To attend a cross section of 4 QS events during each academic year as well as one weekend residential course.
- To submit a report to the Inn within 10 days of each observation.
- Towards the end of the academic cycle to chair a meeting of students; the aim being to identify whether the learning outcomes and students' expectations have been met and to gather general feedback. To report the feedback to the Inn.

- To submit by the end of June an end of year an EO annual report to the Inn. This report will inform the Self-evaluation Report which the respective Inn will submit annually to the Bar Standards Board.
- To provide feedback to COIC on the EO process.
- To meet the requirements and deadlines agreed with the Inn and to maintain open and regular communication with its nominated members of staff.
- To be aware of and be able to reference the four BSB principles underpinning Bar training and the components of the BSB Professional Statement.

Person Specification

The External Observer:

- is able to demonstrate a good understanding of quality assurance mechanisms;
- has direct experience of a profession where skills training is a key element of the operational workings;
- will comply with the Inns' and COIC rules relating to data protection;
- is able to maintain independence, identify and take appropriate action in dealing with conflicts of interest and maintain confidentiality where appropriate;
- can evidence, through personal and/or professional development, an understanding of the effects of unconscious bias;
- will not hold more than one other role as an EO or external examiner during the term of office;
- is willing and able to attend QS events during the evening and over the course of weekends in locations across the country.

Remuneration

EOs will receive an annual fee of £1,800 payable in three instalments:

- £600 upon completion of the induction programme;

- £600 after attendance at a residential event;
- £600 once the minimum number of QS have been observed, a meeting with students has been conducted, and all feedback reports and the annual report have been submitted.

It is estimated that on average EOs will attend 1 day of induction, 4 evening QS, a student meeting and a 2 ½ day residential weekend. We calculate this to be the equivalent of 6 days of attendance.

All reasonable travel and subsistence costs will be met in accordance with each Inn's policies.

Ordinarily only standard class travel and budget accommodation will be reimbursed.

Qualifying Session Feedback Form

To be read in conjunction with the Description information for each QS.

Once completed please forward this form to _____.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Content:						
1.	The title of the QS gave a clear indication of the content.					
2.	The format identified was used.					
3	The description of what was due to happen was followed in the QS.					
4	The QS provided the opportunity for the set learning outcomes to be met.					
5.	The correct QS Framework themes were identified.					

6.	The Professional Statement or other public interest matters were correctly identified.					
7.	The planned timings were adhered to.					
8.	The number of QS which the event counted for was appropriate given the content.					
9.	Where the QS was interactive it included opportunities for all to interact.					
10	If required it was apparent that the students had prepared.					
Practicalities:						
11.	The tutors' delivery was well structured, clear and engaged the attendees.					
12.	There were no practical problems with the venue, equipment etc.					

13.	The number of students attending did not exceed the planned places available.					
14.	There was opportunity for delegates to interact with practitioners.					
15.	The materials supported the intended learning outcomes.					
16.	The cost of the event was appropriate.					
General:						
17.	The content of the QS was set at a level that attendees appeared to be able to engage with.					
18.	The QS succeeded in achieving an environment conducive to learning.					
19.	Are there ways in which the QS could be improved?					

	<i>Please provide your thoughts in the space opposite.</i>	
20.	<p>Did you observe any examples of particularly good practice?</p> <p><i>Please provide your thoughts in the space opposite.</i></p>	
<p>Please use this space to comment on any aspect of the QS you attended. If you disagreed with any of the statements above it would be helpful to have some further information.</p>		

Observer Name (capitals please): _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For office use only:

Inn's Response:	Date:

Inns' External Observers Student Meeting Feedback Form

Name	
Current Inn of Court	
Date Meeting Held	
Number of Students Attending	
Bar course providers represented.	

1.	Arrangements prior to the Qs: choice and availability of sessions, booking process, clarity on what to expect.
2.	Practicalities: venues, materials, tutors.
3.	Learning: did attendance enhance skills and/or knowledge.
4.	Interaction with practitioners: did this enhance the experience.
5.	High points and low points.
6.	Overall how were Qs as compared to what was expected.
7.	Additional comments made by students.

For Office use only:

Inn's Response	Date:

Inns' External Observers Annual Report Form

The Inns have received the feedback you have provided after each of the QS events you have attended. In addition feedback has been received relating to the meeting you have held with students. Now that you have completed a whole academic cycle with your current Inn we would like to hear your overall thoughts. We are keen to understand where improvements could be made and also to hear about examples of good practice you observed as set against the quality assurance mechanisms put in place by the Inns in conjunction with the BSB.

This report will form part of the Inn's Self-evaluation Report which will be shared with the other Inns and COIC. An overview of the four Inns' reports will be produced by COIC and this along with the individual Inn reports will be submitted to the BSB.

Should there be matters which you would like to discuss prior to inclusion in this report please contact either the nominated person at your Inn or Joanna Robinson at COIC.

Name	
Current Inn of Court	
Other periods in the EO post ie. Inn and dates.	

Could you please provide your overall impression of the following.

Content	
1.	The quality of the educational content delivered through the QSs attended and their role as providing a bridge to the community of practitioners.

2.	The effectiveness of the contribution of the Inn members and external experts who participated in the educational and the collegiate elements of the QSs.
3.	Appropriateness and accuracy of the learning outcomes that were set for the QSs.
4.	Perception of the students' engagement with the QSs.
Practicalities	
5.	Organisational arrangements eg. venues, materials etc.
Your Experience	
6.	Areas of good practice identified.
7.	Recommendations for improvement.
8.	The effectiveness of the QS quality assurance mechanisms in general and the role of the EO specifically.
9.	Risks or contributions to the attainment of the four principles of Bar training ie. flexibility, accessibility, affordability and maintenance of high standards.
Your Role	
10.	Areas where you feel more support is needed for EOs.
11.	Evidence that recommendations made by previous EOs had been taken on board.

12.	Please do add in any other comments you would like to make.

We thank you for the time you have taken to produce this report. Your comments will assist us to further develop the Qualifying Session programme provided by the Inns and the associated quality assurance mechanisms.

For Office use only:

Inn's Response	Date:



The Council
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of Court

Inns External Observer Expenses Policy

The Inns' External Observers (EOs) can claim the cost of expenses incurred when attending events for the Inns. This document sets out the rules and procedures for claiming reimbursement.

- All claims for expenses will need to be made on the approved claim form (as attached). Copies can be obtained from the Inn to which the EO is assigned.
- Original receipts should be retained and attached or scanned in with the claim form.
- Expense claims will need to be submitted within 1 month of the date on which the expense was incurred.
- Expenditure will be reimbursed to EOs by BACS payment.
- Travel expenses will be refunded to those travelling from within the UK only unless authorised by the Inn in advance.
- One claim should be submitted for each individual trip/occasion.

Rail/Coach Travel

EOs are expected to plan ahead and take advantage of advanced booking and other concessions whenever possible. EOs are encouraged to make use of public transport where available taking into account issues of adequacy, reliability, safety and physical ability.

EOs may travel first class only if they are prepared to meet the difference between the First Class and the cheapest Advanced Standard Class fare at their own expense.

Should an event run so long such that the specified time of travel associated with an advanced booked ticket is missed, then any additional cost incurred may be claimed. Receipts for the original and subsequent ticket purchase must all accompany the expense claim.

Should an event run short additional expense incurred in travelling earlier than the specified time on an advanced booked ticket will not be reimbursed.

Use of Taxis

Taxis will only be reimbursed between the venue and the nearest station where public transport is not available.

If for any reason the normal route home is affected the Inn may refund other expenses incurred. This could include the use of taxis.

If there is a valid reason for taking any other taxis this must be approved in advance eg. disability, pregnancy or public transport not being readily available.

Air Fares

In the event of air fare being the cheaper mode of travel, the Inn has discretion to reimburse these costs, however EOs must seek approval from the Inn before booking.

Using own car

EOs who use their own vehicles for travel to and from the venue may claim reimbursement as set out below:

Mileage should be calculated from the home base with the departure and destination detailed on the claim form. Expenses incurred will be reimbursed using the HMRC approved mileage rates ie. for the first 10,000 business miles in the tax year 45p per mile and then 25p for each business mile over 10,000.

The EO should ensure that their insurance cover extends to business use and the insurer should, if necessary, be asked to endorse the certificate to confirm that occasional business use is covered by the insurance policy.

COIC will not accept liability for any injury or damage arising from the use of private motor vehicles while on business occasions.

Use of a motorcycle

Should a claimant use a motorcycle for travel then the procedure for use of a car applies except that an allowance of 24p per mile can be claimed. As with car use the EO should ensure that the appropriate insurance arrangements are in place.

Car Parking/Tolls/Congestion Charge

Parking is currently free at the majority of venues used for Qualifying Sessions. To park at one of the Inns please contact the relevant Inn to make arrangements. Parking fees incurred, excluding any parking fines or other penalties, can be claimed provided an original receipt is produced.

Out of pocket expenses

EOs may claim the cost of small out of pocket expenses where it is not normally possible to obtain receipts. Examples of such expenses are parking meters (but not fines), tube travel where an oyster card is used and rent-a-bike charges. All items claimed should be itemised and described fully on the claim form.

Subsistence

Food/drink costs while travelling may be claimed for actual expenditure within maximum limits as follows.

- Journeys over 90 mins in duration: Beverage/Snack £5
- Journeys at a time when a meal would normally be taken: Breakfast - £10, Lunch - £15, Dinner - £25
- The total amount claimed for any 24 hour period must not exceed £50.

Where a meeting or event is scheduled for a whole day and lunch is not provided lunch to a maximum of £15 may be claimed. Where a meeting or event necessitates an overnight stay and dinner is not provided a maximum of £25 may be claimed for dinner and £10 for breakfast.

Accommodation

It may be necessary to stay overnight when attending an Inn event. The Inn will book accommodation to ensure a low/reduced rate is obtained where possible. The Inn will confirm booking dates prior to travel. Accommodation will be provided only where it is not possible to arrive on time for an event in the morning or if it is not possible to return home at a reasonable hour after an event in the evening.

Bookings will usually be made on a Bed and Breakfast basis only. All extras must be settled on departure.

It may not always be possible for the room costs to be settled in advance. The EO will be notified in advance when this occurs and EOs will be required to settle the entire bill when checking out.

Prior authorisation should be sought from the Inn regarding EOs making their own arrangements.

The maximum reimbursement for a room will be £145 within central London and £105 outside of central London within the UK.

Where accommodation costs are saved by staying with friends, relatives or other hosts, an allowance of up to £25 per night may be claimed.

Expenses Claim Form

Name:	
Event & Date(s):	

For train / taxi travel

Details of receipts attached:	
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For travel by car/ motorcycle

Mileage rate being claimed ie. 45p or 25p.	
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Outward Journey:

Postcode of departure point:		Number of miles:		Cost of Mileage:	
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Return Journey:

Postcode of arrival point:		Number of miles:		Cost of Mileage:	
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Additional Expenses:

Item	Amount Claimed

Total amount claimed:	£
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Payment details:

Account holder:	
Sort code:	
Account number:	

Please return the form (with receipts where appropriate) by email/post to

XXXX, The Honourable Society of XXXX, London XXXX

someone@Inn.org.uk
