

Glossary of Terms

Below is a brief explanation of some of the terms you will become very familiar with over the year.

Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC): A one-year course that all those training for a career at the Bar must complete after their law degree or conversion course. The name will no longer be used for current courses after September 2020 but it is a term you may still hear. Course providers are now able to name their own courses.

Bachelor of Laws (LLB): The Bachelor of Laws (abbreviated LL.B. or LLB) is an undergraduate, or bachelor, degree in law offered in most common law countries as the primary law degree.

Benchers: A senior member of the Inn. Often involved in the governance of the Inn.

Call to the Bar: The formal ceremony following completion of the Bar Course during which the Inn officially “Calls” people to the Bar. This signals the end of the academic stage of training to become a barrister. However, those Called may only refer to themselves as a barrister in certain situations. These are set out on the Bar Council’s website.

Civil Law: You will hear barristers say that they practise in a “mixed civil” or “general civil” set. This means the area of practice of their Chambers is civil as opposed to criminal law, which includes employment, professional negligence, trusts and probate.

Chambers: Buildings in which barristers are based for private practice. Note: Chambers do not employ barristers; barristers in chambers are self-employed. Chambers are simply a collection of individuals who share an office space and accompanied costs, and also who can use Chambers’ name and reputation to help them build up their own practice.

Chancery Law: A practice area encompassing the following areas of work: banking; charities; civil fraud; company; consumer credit; financial services and regulation; insolvency (corporate and personal); intellectual property; land and real property; landlord and tenant; media and entertainment; pensions; probate and administration of estates; professional negligence; revenue and tax; trusts and settlements.

Conversion course: A one year course for graduates whose first degree isn't in law (or for those who have a law degree from a different jurisdiction). Some are referred to as the CPE (common professional examination), others as the GDL or PGDL (postgraduate diploma in law) but essentially these are the same thing.

CPD: Continuing Professional Development. CPD is undertaken with a view to barristers developing their, knowledge and professional standards in areas relevant to their present or proposed area of practice. This is in order for them to keep themselves up to date and maintain the highest standards of professional practice. During the first three years of

