

combar

The Commercial Bar Association

**A CAREER AT THE
COMMERCIAL BAR**



“...a career like no other
with opportunities like
no other ...”

A CAREER AT THE COMMERCIAL BAR

Introduction	4
What is the Commercial Bar?	5
Why should you choose a career at the Commercial Bar?	6
Myths about the Commercial Bar	8
How to qualify as a barrister at the Commercial Bar	12
Useful websites	19

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a career can be daunting at the best of times. Most people will have a good idea of what a job as a doctor, teacher or engineer will involve, but perhaps less of a feel for what barristers do. This brief guide to the Commercial Bar aims to help those who are thinking about their future vocation by explaining a little about the Commercial Bar and the path that is involved in pursuing a career in it.

The role of a barrister is an exciting one. A barrister is a specialist lawyer who is referred complex legal disputes by a solicitor and, often, will be responsible for presenting arguments concerning that dispute in court, before a judge. A commercial barrister is one who specialises in legal issues in the broad field of business and finance. The facts of commercial cases can often be more exciting than people might imagine; for example, as a junior barrister you might find yourself dealing with a contractual dispute between a player and a football club or the emergency freezing of the assets of a Russian oligarch.

The Commercial Bar has a proud tradition stretching back hundreds of years and a strong future. We hope this guide will inspire you to consider it as a career.

“...the front line of advocacy”



WHAT IS THE COMMERCIAL BAR?

The independent Bar is a specialist referral profession offering expert legal advice and advocacy. Barristers practising at the independent Bar are self-employed but (in most cases) group together into sets of chambers for the purpose of sharing premises and other overheads.

As the law has become more complex, members of the Bar have tended to specialise in particular areas and to form Specialist Bar Associations (SBAs), of which COMBAR is one. COMBAR now has over 1,500 members with 38 member sets of chambers and individual members from 23 sets across Bristol, Leeds, London, Liverpool and Manchester. We also have in-house barrister members at city law firms.

The members of COMBAR practise commercial law, which is a broad term encompassing a wide range of civil (as opposed to criminal) legal matters. Commercial law is perhaps best summed up as the law which applies to business and financial disputes, and includes the law relating to banking, insurance, sale of goods, shipping, aviation, financial services regulation, companies, insolvency and international arbitration and employment. Commercial barristers

may also deal with other areas of law in which commercial issues arise, including public law, professional negligence, intellectual property, media and entertainment law, energy and construction. Individuals and chambers may specialise in particular areas within the broad field of commercial law, and specialism tends to increase with seniority.

‘Commercial law is perhaps best summed up as the law which applies to business and financial disputes.’

Commercial barristers are usually instructed by solicitors rather than by a client directly; the services they provide fall into two main areas. First, and most importantly, a barrister is a specialist advocate who will present the client's case in court or before other tribunals. Historically, oral advocacy has been the most important element of the presentation of cases but, particularly in the field of commercial law, written advocacy has become more and more important. Secondly, as an expert in the area of commercial law, he or she will advise on particular commercial legal issues (frequently, but not always, arising in the context of disputes).

WHY SHOULD YOU CHOOSE A CAREER AT THE COMMERCIAL BAR?

You are likely to spend a significant amount of your life working. It is vital that you enjoy whatever you do. As well as being potentially lucrative, a career at the Commercial Bar is challenging and stimulating, and offers far more independence at an earlier career stage than is available to most solicitors or other employed lawyers.

The Bar is a referral profession. As a commercial barrister, you are sent the most difficult problems that your instructing solicitors or in-house lawyers have already pondered before seeking counsel's advice. You will sometimes be asked by people much older and more experienced than you to advise on how cases should be run. The most interesting problems often come to your desk, with a junior solicitor having assembled all the relevant papers for you to consider in relative tranquillity without the distractions of dealing with lay clients or the administrative needs of running a solicitors' firm. It is a great privilege to be in that referral position.

The quality of work sent to commercial barristers is generally very high. Commercial cases are more likely to be well funded and prepared: the sums at stake are much more likely to justify every stone being turned. You are more likely to be provided with well-ordered papers and proper instructions, and to

have sufficient time to prepare. Your solicitors are likely to be thorough and well supported in their turn. It is no coincidence that many of the important decisions in contract and tort law over the past 40 years have been in commercial cases. These are more likely to involve parties with the resources to take cases to the higher courts and to pay for good quality legal representation to argue novel and complex points of law. Also, the enormous range of complicated factual situations thrown up by commercial legal disputes means that there is often a great variety in the work done by commercial barristers; it is fair to say that other areas of legal practice (such as crime, personal injury or family work) are normally far less varied. Finally, commercial work frequently involves advising and acting for foreign clients, which can provide opportunities for travelling and working abroad from time to time in a commercial barrister's career.

The Bar is also the front line of advocacy. There is no question that as a barrister you will have far more opportunity for advocacy than most solicitor advocates. Solicitors have had higher rights of audience for over 25 years now and there is no suggestion that the independent Commercial Bar is under threat; it is still rare for a solicitor

'Commercial cases are more likely to be well funded and prepared: the sums at stake are much more likely to justify every stone being turned.'

advocate to conduct a commercial trial or complex hearing. COMBAR is confident that the specialisation, experience and independence of the Commercial Bar will mean that it remains the first port of call for advocacy in commercial cases. If you want to be an advocate you should come to the Bar.

For many barristers, self-employment is a huge plus. Not having a boss does not mean that barristers are less likely to work hard. But it does give you a sense of control over when and in what circumstances you work. It is in many ways much more like university than other careers: you are given work to do, and it is up to you to make sure that it is done, and to choose when you want to do it. There is scope for taking long holidays, but few successful barristers do not work at weekends from time to time.

Finally, but importantly, commercial barristers can also volunteer their time and use their skills as advocates to assist those in need of legal advice and representation but who cannot afford to pay for it and who would otherwise be unable properly to access the legal system. Commercial cases will not usually attract public funding (Legal Aid). The Bar Pro Bono Unit is a charity which helps to find pro bono (free) legal assistance by allocating deserving cases to its panel of over 2,000 volunteer barristers (including over 250 QCs) from all over England and Wales. Barristers can also get involved in various other pro bono schemes and projects nationally and internationally and members of COMBAR are also involved in several social mobility schemes such as the Social Mobility Foundation and the Pegasus Access Scheme.

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MYTHS ABOUT THE COMMERCIAL BAR

There are a number of myths about the Bar which have been circulating for some time. They should be treated with caution. Here are a few of them.

First Myth: “There is no point becoming a barrister because it is a dying profession”

The truth is that the Commercial Bar is in excellent health and the past 10 years have been its best ever. The introduction of solicitor advocates has not led to a decline in the work coming to the Commercial Bar, and there is no reason to suggest that it will in the future. The Commercial Court has shown a remarkable consistency in the volume of new work over the years. Clients in commercial cases, which are often high-value and complex, will continue to demand the best specialist advocacy and advice. This is concentrated at the Commercial Bar.

About 80% of all cases in the Commercial Court involve at least one party from outside England and Wales and about half of the cases have no connection with England or Wales, but the parties have chosen to use English lawyers and judges to resolve their disputes. Even more foreigners arbitrate in England; London is one of the world’s leading arbitration venues. Part of the

reason for that popularity is because of the split profession, and the body of high-quality specialist advocates in London.

London has, essentially, the biggest dedicated business court in the world. That court maintains and enhances the UK’s world-class reputation as the first choice for business law and commercial dispute resolution. For the first time the specialist jurisdictions of the High Court dealing with business disputes (the Chancery Division, the Commercial Court and the Technology and Construction Court) have been brought together under one roof at the new Rolls Building on Fetter Lane.

Within this framework, the Commercial Bar offers tremendous value for money. Barristers’ overheads are relatively low, enabling junior barristers to make a good living at a fraction of the charge-out rate of support staff in firms both domestically and abroad. Specialisation helps both solicitors and the Bar bring business to London.

If one day in the future there is a fused profession – which we have no reason to think there will be – if you qualify as a barrister you will have had years of valuable experience. A change in the structure of the professions will not reduce the demand for that experience.

Second Myth: “Barristers don’t make enough money”

While there is undoubtedly serious pressure on the earnings of the publicly funded Bar, you should bear in mind that commercial law is almost always privately funded. This means that commercial barristers charge the market price. The truth is that most barristers at the Commercial Bar earn a comfortable living and a significant proportion do far better than that. Publications such as the Legal 500 contain estimated figures for barristers’ earnings for those who are interested.

Barristers and solicitors have a different earnings curve. At particular stages as a commercial barrister you may be ahead or behind solicitors doing commercial work. Typically, in recent years junior barristers have earned more than assistant solicitors; solicitors who are made partner are likely to see a dramatic increase in their earnings and may then be ahead; later on, a handful of star commercial Queen’s Counsel probably outstrip most partners.

If you are going to be a commercial lawyer, it would be quite wrong to choose which branch of the profession to go into on the basis of money. If you are successful in either branch, you will live very comfortably. The other differences are much more important.

Third Myth: “Choosing to be a barrister is too risky”

There is risk in choosing to come to the Bar. But you need to assess those risks, and the risks in other options, carefully.

The financial uncertainty in choosing the Commercial Bar as a career is not as great as it may seem. There are two years of Bar-specific training to get through: the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) and Pupillage.

BPTC: For the BPTC year, the four Inns of Court offer substantial scholarships. Details are available from their education and training departments. There are several hundred of these, ranging from a few hundred pounds to up to £22,000. Nearly half of COMBAR chamber members operate schemes to let their future pupils draw down part of their pupillage award in advance during the BPTC year. Funding may also be available from the Bar Council Scholarship Trust which provides certain bursaries and covers the BPTC course fees for one aspiring barrister every year; the Bar Council also runs an annual law reform essay competition with prize monies totalling some £9,000; in addition, the Bar Council website (www.barcouncil.org.uk) contains further information about grants, awards, bursaries etc.

MYTHS ABOUT THE COMMERCIAL BAR *continued*

Pupillage: COMBAR sets offer around 100 pupillages annually. The precise details are available from COMBAR members' websites, but the vast majority of these pupillages are funded in the sum of between £30,000 and £45,000 p.a. The largest awards made by COMBAR sets are up to £60,000 p.a. The awards are tax free in respect of the first six months. Some sets do not count earnings from the second six months of practice in that sum. Many sets also offer guarantees as to earnings in the initial years of practise after pupillage.

Tenancy is a major prize. It affords a level of career security which is more comparable to that offered by a partnership than to being retained as an assistant in a solicitors' firm. Like all major prizes the competition is intense. But this should not deter the most able candidates who are committed to a career at the Commercial Bar. Other organisations have their own uncertainties: for example, on qualification and partnership. By this time many people have spouses, mortgages and children. The front-loading of uncertainty at the Bar is to many a plus, not a minus.

If you don't achieve a tenancy, you will have invested two years and gained a valuable training in return. Having

completed pupillage at a good set of chambers is a major selling point on a legal (and a non-legal) CV. Many barristers who have completed pupillage find that they easily obtain jobs at solicitors' firms and in commerce either by retraining as a solicitor (normally the qualification can be transferred by taking a single examination) or as an employed barrister.

Fourth myth: "I wouldn't fit in"

The work of the Commercial Bar is sufficiently difficult, and the prize of tenancy such a valuable one, that no sensible set of chambers would do anything other than attempt to choose the best candidates. We need the widest range of applicants. It is only ability, and not race, sex, school or social background that we are interested in.

The Commercial Bar has a fine tradition of being open to all, and fiercely meritocratic. The statistics for those coming into the profession as a whole show encouraging trends; currently, 43% of all pupils are female, and 17% are from ethnic minorities (a greater proportion than in society as a whole). Barristers are fiercely individualistic, and the personalities and attitudes of those who make up a set of chambers are frequently very different. No one should have any reason to feel excluded.

Fifth myth: "If I want to do advocacy I should just become a solicitor advocate"

The fact is that a practitioner is far more likely to develop specialist advocacy experience as a commercial barrister than as a solicitor advocate. As set out earlier, after 25 years of solicitor advocates having higher rights of audience, it is still rare for them to conduct commercial trials, complex hearings in court, or appeals. Written and oral advocacy is at the heart of a commercial barrister's professional life, whether in court, before arbitration panels, or in tribunals.

From the outset of a junior commercial barrister's career, you are given significant individual responsibility, which makes the Commercial Bar an exciting and rewarding career choice. Solicitor advocates are often part of a much larger organisation and may not immediately have personal responsibility for all their cases nor appear that regularly in court. As well as through firms of solicitors, barristers also increasingly receive instructions directly from legal departments of large companies and institutions, local government bodies and foreign lawyers.

Sixth myth: "I don't stand a chance unless I've been to Oxford or Cambridge"

Historically there have always been a high number of applications to be commercial barristers from people who have attended Oxbridge. Looking forward, however, we want to recruit the brightest and the best candidates, wherever the candidate obtained a degree or post-graduate qualifications. At the Commercial Bar intellectual ability and the individual achievement of candidates are the relevant touchstones, not the university where qualifications were obtained.

COMBAR is committed to encouraging applications from a wide range of universities, and for this reason has for ten years now been attending law fairs around the country at non-Oxbridge universities in order to educate and encourage students to consider the Commercial Bar as a career.

Also of importance in a candidate's CV are the extra curricular activities undertaken, whether they are immediately referable to advocacy skills (such as public speaking, debating and mooting) or whether they are more general activities and achievements which demonstrate an individual's interpersonal or leadership skills and experience.



To qualify as a barrister, you must complete three stages of training:

1

The academic stage: obtaining an undergraduate degree either in law or in another subject supplemented by a 'conversion course'.

2

The vocational stage: basic training (provided by the Bar Professional Training Course) in the practical skills necessary for practise as a barrister.

3

Pupillage: twelve months of on-the-job training in a set of chambers or another approved legal organisation.

HOW TO QUALIFY AS A BARRISTER AT THE COMMERCIAL BAR

The Academic Stage

There are two main routes to obtaining the academic qualifications necessary to pursue a career as a commercial barrister. For those who want to take the direct route, the academic stage of training is satisfied by completing a qualifying law degree. The principal alternative is to take a degree in another subject, followed by a 'conversion course' leading either to the Common Professional Examination (CPE) or the Post Graduate Diploma in Law (PgDL) (from chambers' point of view, it makes no difference whether your course is titled CPE or PgDL). A further alternative for non-law graduates is to take a two-year full-time (three-year part-time) Senior Status Law Degree.

Details of all of the institutions offering qualifying law degrees, CPE/PgDL courses and Senior Status Law Degrees are available on the website of the Bar Standards Board, together with application details (www.barstandardsboard.org.uk).

Whether you take an undergraduate degree in law or in another subject, the Bar Standards Board's minimum academic requirement is a 2:2 UK Honours degree or its equivalent. In practice, at the Commercial Bar the academic threshold is higher: each member of COMBAR has its own

selection criteria but, as a general rule, they recruit from amongst candidates with first or good upper second-class degrees. Successful candidates often (but by no means always) have postgraduate qualifications, whether from UK institutions or foreign universities.

The academic stage of training ensures that aspiring barristers have a grounding in each of the seven 'foundation' subjects identified by the Bar Standards Board as compulsory areas of study for those entering the profession (contract, tort, property law, equity and trusts, EU law, public law and criminal law). Students on a law conversion course pack these subjects into one intensive year's study (full-time, or two years part-time), usually leaving only limited room for exploration into other areas of the law. Law undergraduates, on the other hand, have the time – and are usually required – to range further. This does not mean that non-law graduates will be regarded by chambers as second-class candidates when the time comes to apply for pupillage. Experience tells us time and again that ability and rigour developed in other academic disciplines transfer very successfully to the Commercial Bar and pupillage applications are welcomed from law and non-law graduates alike.

If you intend to move straight on to the second and third stages of training without a break, there are some important steps to take before you complete the academic stage:

- You should undertake some mini-pupillages or work placements in chambers you may wish to apply to for pupillage
- You must join one of the Inns of Court
- You must apply for a place on the Bar Professional Training Course
- You should consider applying to your Inn for funding for your Bar Professional Training Course.
- You must apply for pupillage

With the exception of applications for mini-pupillage in some chambers, there are deadlines for each of these steps. You will need to familiarise yourself with these deadlines; some fall early in the final year of academic study. As a rule of thumb, you must apply for a place on the Bar Professional Training Course one year before you wish to start the course, you must apply to join an Inn no later than six months before you start the Bar Professional Training Course, and you must apply for pupillage one and half years before the pupillage starts.

HOW TO QUALIFY AS A BARRISTER AT THE COMMERCIAL BAR

continued

There are also other opportunities for legal work experience, including advocacy, by doing pro bono work while still at university. Projects range from Street Law programmes to volunteering at law centres. Students should get in touch with the pro bono contact in their law department for more information. In addition, during the final year of a law degree or whilst undertaking the CPE/ PgDL and thereafter, trainee barristers can obtain valuable advocacy experience and use their advocacy skills to assist those who cannot afford legal support through the Free Representation Unit (FRU). FRU provides legal advice, case preparation and representation in tribunals mainly for social security and employment law cases for those who could not otherwise afford legal assistance. All FRU's representatives are volunteers who are trained by FRU and work under the supervision of its case workers (see www.thefru.org.uk).

The Vocational Stage

Once you have successfully completed your academic studies and have been admitted to one of the Inns of Court, the next stage of training is the vocational stage. This takes the form of the Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC). Full-time students complete the BPTC in one academic year; the part-time course runs for two years.

The purpose of the BPTC is to give prospective barristers a good grounding in the practical skills and knowledge necessary to take them through pupillage and the early months of practise. The focus is on case preparation, procedural knowledge and written and oral skills.

The principal skills taught are legal research and case preparation, opinion writing, drafting of various documents, conference skills, negotiation and advocacy. The main areas of legal knowledge taught are civil litigation and remedies, criminal litigation and sentencing, evidence, and professional ethics. You will also study two option subjects (from a choice of six or more subjects which vary from course provider to course provider). Teaching and forms of assessment are tailored to meet the nature of the subjects. For example, the oral skills are often taught in workshops and evaluated using videoed performances of practical exercises; procedural knowledge is usually taught in lectures and assessed using multiple-choice tests.

The Bar Council has validated various BPTC providers across England and Wales to run the BPTC. Their contact details (for prospectus and fee information) and details of the timetable for applications are

available on the Bar Standards Board website. Applications must be made through the internet-based central applications system, found at www.barprofessionaltraining.org.uk. There is significant competition for places on the BPTC (Bar Council figures for the year 2010/2011 show that approximately 3,099 candidates applied with only about 1,422 enrolling) – it is therefore important to ensure that you submit your application in time to be considered in the first round of applications.

The Bar Course Aptitude Test:

Before starting the BPTC, you must pass the Bar Course Aptitude test. This is designed to test critical thinking and reasoning. The aim of the test is to ensure that those who go onto the BPTC have the required skills to succeed.

In 2014, the cost of the full-time BPTC course ranged from £12,000 to £18,000 depending on the institution. Each of the Inns offers a certain number of scholarships and awards covering part or all of this fee (see [Joining an Inn](#)). In addition, a number of COMBAR member sets allow students to whom they have given pupillage to draw down part of their pupillage award during the BPTC year. Please visit the websites of the individual members of COMBAR for further information.

Pupillage

■ What is pupillage?

Pupillage is the final stage of training for the Bar. It consists of twelve months' practical, on-the-job training under the supervision of experienced barristers (referred to as pupil supervisors). Upon successful completion of the year, pupils are awarded a full practising certificate by the Bar Council and are eligible to practise as a tenant in a set of chambers.

The structure and content of pupillage varies from chambers to chambers and we are only able to give a general picture here – we encourage you to visit the websites of the individual members of COMBAR for more detailed information. See the COMBAR website www.combar.com for contact details.

The purpose of pupillage is to give pupils a broad but thorough training in the types of work done by their chambers. Typically, pupils will spend their time with a number of different pupil supervisors in the course of the year to expose them to a variety of chambers' work: it is not unusual for pupils to change supervisor every three months, though some chambers offer more or less frequent rotations. During the course of their pupillages, pupils will be expected to complete the Bar

HOW TO QUALIFY AS A BARRISTER AT THE COMMERCIAL BAR

continued

Standards Board pupillage checklist used by their chambers (in many COMBAR chambers, this will be the Commercial Pupillage checklist).

The work of pupils is varied and challenging. They are expected to produce pleadings, skeleton arguments and opinions in their pupil supervisor's cases as if they were themselves instructed by the client. They attend conferences with clients, and usually accompany their pupil supervisor to court hearings, arbitrations and mediations. They learn by direct experience how to prepare for hearings and to do the necessary legal research. They are not usually expected to undertake extensive photocopying or other administrative tasks – an advantage they enjoy over most trainee solicitors.

Methods of assessment vary considerably from chambers to chambers, but continual assessment in one form or another is undoubtedly a part of every pupillage at the Commercial Bar. Pupils should expect their pupil supervisor to review and discuss their work with them on a regular basis. It is likely that they will also be asked to do work for other, often senior, members of chambers who will evaluate the product and report back to chambers. In some chambers, regular assessed exercises are also set for pupils.

This culminates in the tenancy decision, commonly made between eight and ten months into pupillage, when chambers tell their pupils whether or not they will be offered a tenancy in chambers. Chambers often support unsuccessful pupils to obtain tenancies elsewhere.

■ How to apply for pupillage

COMBAR sets offer a total of about 100 pupilages annually. Details of these pupilages can be found in a variety of sources: on the websites of the individual members of COMBAR; in the Pupillage Handbook published by the Bar Standards Board each year and available from the Bar Council; on the Bar Council's designated website (www.pupillagegateway.com); and in the various student directories published by, for example, Chambers and Partners ("Student Guide") and GTI media ("Target Jobs Law").

The Pupillage Gateway website (www.pupillagegateway.com) is an on-line system provided by the Bar Council for (i) advertising all pupillage vacancies and (ii) administering pupillage applications in relation (only) to those chambers which participate in the Gateway's centralised application system. Some chambers, although they are obliged to advertise on the Gateway, seek direct applications from

candidates. During the recruitment season, the Pupillage Gateway website contains details of all pupilages currently offered by any set of chambers. It enables pupillage applicants to search for suitable pupilages on-line, and it incorporates an on-line application form which applicants must use to apply for pupillage in those chambers which are participating in the Gateway. The deadline for submitting applications to the Pupillage Gateway System is currently 30 April in the year before the year in which you wish to start pupillage. However, for those chambers not participating in the system, application deadlines vary and are frequently earlier than this.

Applicants should study the Pupillage Gateway Applicant User Guide to be found on the Pupillage Gateway website. There is no charge to applicants using the system. Chambers who participate in the Pupillage Gateway System announce their recruitment decisions to applicants at the start of August in the application year.

■ Mini-pupillage

A mini-pupillage is a short period of work experience in a set of chambers. It may last for anything from 2 days to 1 week, depending on the chambers. From chambers' point of view, mini-pupilages

can provide an opportunity to gauge the abilities of prospective pupillage applicants over a longer period than is possible in a formal pupillage interview. As a result, some commercial sets of chambers regard mini-pupilages as an important part of their recruitment process, and some require prospective pupils to undertake an assessed mini-pupillage before they can be considered for pupillage.

For the prospective pupil, mini-pupilages offer an invaluable insight into life at the Commercial Bar and – just as important – into the work and culture of individual sets of chambers within the commercial field. During a mini-pupillage you will meet members of chambers, you will probably have the opportunity to speak to current and recent pupils about their experiences as trainee barristers, and you will be given a taste of the work done in those chambers.

Given their importance to the recruitment process at the Commercial Bar, you should give careful thought to the chambers you apply to for mini-pupillage. You will find more information about mini-pupilages on the websites of the individual members of COMBAR. (See the Useful Websites page of this booklet). Candidates from less advantaged backgrounds might also be eligible for particular work experience

HOW TO QUALIFY AS A BARRISTER AT THE COMMERCIAL BAR

continued

schemes run by the Social Mobility Foundation, the Pegasus Access Scheme, and Middle Temple (see 'Useful Websites'). You may also want to consider completing a vacation placement in a firm of solicitors in order to provide a point of comparison.

■ Joining an Inn

Every student must join one of the Inns of Court before starting the vocational stage of his or her training. There are four Inns: Gray's Inn, Inner Temple, Lincoln's Inn and Middle Temple. Historically, they provided training and accommodation to barristers. Today, many of their educational functions have passed to Bar Professional Training Course providers. However, they remain influential societies within the profession and they continue to provide facilities, funding, advice and support to student members. They also retain the power to call students to the Bar entitling them to call themselves 'barrister' and, following completion of twelve months' pupillage, to exercise rights of audience in the higher courts of England and Wales.

Each of the Inns has an education department offering advice to its student members about all aspects of training as a barrister. The Inns also

provide a number of useful career-related services including sponsorship schemes (where a student is paired with a practising barrister who acts as a mentor), marshalling (where students spend a few days sitting with a judge in court), mooted competitions and advocacy training. In terms of facilities, each has a law library, common rooms, a bar, a dining hall (dining survives as a minor aspect of qualification for the Bar – students are expected to dine on twelve occasions in order to be called to the Bar) and attractive grounds.

Your choice of Inn has no influence on the area of law you practise in subsequently, nor on the chambers to which you apply for pupillage. For some, the choice turns on a comparison of the Inns' respective facilities or ambiance, but for many the determining factor is the scholarships and awards available at the different Inns for the various stages of training. Between them the Inns provide over £3 million in scholarships. About one third of BPTC students have a scholarship from one of the Inns of Court. Each of the Inns produces a guide to its own scholarships and awards and we recommend that you consider these carefully before choosing which Inn to join.



USEFUL WEBSITES

www.combar.com (this website contains links to the websites of all chambers members of COMBAR)

The Inns of Court

www.graysinn.org.uk
www.innertemple.org.uk
www.lincolnsinn.org.uk
www.middletemple.org.uk

Barristers' regulatory and representative bodies

www.barcouncil.org.uk
www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

Applications for pupillage

www.pupillagegateway.com

Other relevant Specialist Bar Associations

www.chba.org.uk/ (Chancery Bar Association)
www.lclcba.com/ (London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association)
www.tecbar.org/ (Technology and Construction Bar Association)

Work experience

www.barprobono.org.uk
www.thefru.org.uk

Other useful websites

www.lawcareers.net
www.pegasus.me
www.socialmobility.org.uk
www.middletemple.org.uk/education-and-training/scholarships-and-prizes/access-to-the-bar-awards/



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Contacts

This booklet is intended to provide general information to those considering a career at the Commercial Bar. There is no student membership of COMBAR.

Enquiries as to pupillage at individual COMBAR sets should be directed to those sets. A link can be found to all COMBAR sets' and Individual websites at www.combar.com