



## Qualifying Sessions

### Why we have Qualifying Sessions

Qualifying Sessions take place alongside your vocational training and provide opportunities for professional and ethical development which complement and build on your academic and vocational education and form a bridge to the final component of Bar training, pupillage. Qualifying Sessions also provide opportunities for you to enhance your understanding of the role of barristers in the wider justice system and the rule of law.

Mixing with practitioners, discussing the practical and ethical elements of being in practice – whether in the self-employed or employed Bar – and practising professional skills in front of practitioners provides a level of reality, and an extra stimulation to learning.

Through the provision of both practical and knowledge-based sessions, delivered voluntarily by specially selected and trained members of the profession and experts, the Inn will help equip you to undertake the next stage of training and to be fit and proper to serve the public as barristers. The links made with the profession through Gray's can provide you with a foundation for pupillage and a career at the Bar thereafter.

### What are Qualifying Sessions

Qualifying Sessions are designed to help you acquire one or more of the knowledge areas, skills or attributes set out in the BSB's Professional Statement but may also cover more general topics related to the wider workings of the Bar, the administration of justice and the public interest it serves. Additionally, Qualifying Sessions may be used to help you prepare for practice and develop a career whilst addressing wider wellbeing issues in the context of the practising Bar.

### The Qualifying Session Programme

You must attend a minimum of ten Qualifying Sessions in order to receive sufficient opportunity to meet with and learn from a variety of practitioners, judges and experts and thereby facilitate your integration into the 'community of practice'.

**Only 6 Qualifying Sessions will be counted per term.** [Please find all the information on the website.](#)

You must attend a minimum of one session under each of the themes outlined below and at least two sessions must be interactive and require preparation in advance.

The five themes, which cover all aspects of the skills and knowledge you need to learn as part of your training for the Bar, are:

- Ethics, Standards and Values
- Advocacy Skills
- Legal Knowledge, Justice and the Rule of Law
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Preparation for Pupillage, Career Development and Wellbeing

For information about the QS program, please visit the [Events page](#) on our Website.

## Attendance at Qualifying Sessions

In accordance with BSB regulations, you are required to complete 10 Qs during a period of no more than 5 years ending on the date on which you are Called to the Bar. We strongly encourage you however to complete your Qs within the 2 years which encompass your Bar Course, to ensure you have access to sessions which are timely and relevant to your stage of development.

You must complete all mandatory Qualifying Sessions prior to be Called, including transferring lawyers and specially qualified applicants. Gray's Inn will maintain records of the Qualifying Sessions completed by each student and will make those records available to the BSB at their request.

Gray's Inn will develop their program of Qualifying Sessions outside of London (not including the Southeast Circuit) to promote accessibility for all students. Such Qualifying Sessions will comply with this schedule and the rules accompanying this document.

Attendance to an education and training event may count for more than one Qualifying Session based on content and learning outcomes and in accordance with common rules to be developed.

Attendance at your Call ceremony and the accompanying event will not count as a Qualifying Session. Attendance at a dinner alone will not count as a Qualifying Session.

Attendance at a QS will not be counted unless you have registered, paid the prescribed fee (where applicable) and participated in the whole of the event as required. If you fail to attend a Qualifying Session in full, a Qualifying Session will not be awarded. This includes online sessions.

Qs can only be waived or modified in exceptional circumstances. Requests for such waivers or modifications must be put in writing to the [Compliance and Member Services Manager, Samantha Phillips](#).

- If you started the Bar Course **BEFORE** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and you expect to be called **BEFORE** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, you are required to complete 12 QS for Call. Call to the Bar is counted as a QS. No themed or interactive QS required. DBS check is not required for Call.
- If you started the Bar Course **BEFORE** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and you do not expect to be called **BEFORE** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, you are required to complete 10QS for Call. Call to the Bar is not counted as a QS. No Themed or interactive QS are required. DBS check is required for Call.
- If you **did not** start the Bar Course **BEFORE** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and you completed any Qs before 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, you are required to complete 10QS for Call. Call to the Bar is not counted as a QS. No Themed or interactive QS are required. DBS check is required for Call.
- If you **did not** start the Bar Course **BEFORE** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and you **did not** complete any Qs before 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, you are required to complete 10QS for Call. Call to the Bar is not counted as a QS. Five themed QS and two interactive QS are required. DBS check is required for Call.

## Attendance policy

Unfortunately, we have experienced an extreme increase in students overbooking their Qs, cancelling them at the eleventh hour or failing to attend at all without appropriate reason and notice. Students should consider all bookings a professional commitment and should only book onto an event if they fully plan on attending. **Once booked on, students will be unable to cancel and receive a refund other than in exceptional circumstances and will be required to provide evidence to support this.**

The cancellation period for events is 3.5 business days and this may be longer for some events, such as moots. If you are unable to attend or you are running late, you must call 020 7458 7808 or [email Roberta Lai](#) and explain why. Following the event, [you must email directly Samantha Phillips](#) explaining why you did not attend the event.

From January 2022 we are charging an administrative fee of £5 to **all** refund requests.

Please read the [Terms and Conditions](#) on our website.

If you know that you will be late or unable to attend an event in person or online, you must let us know by calling 020 7458 7808 or by emailing [Roberta Lai](#). Students who fail to attend a booked session without prior notice will be required to explain themselves in writing to the Compliance and Member Services Manager, [Samantha Phillips](#). Please take careful notice of this policy as it may affect the timing of your Call to the Bar.

### Online Qualifying Sessions

The majority of online Qualifying Sessions are for our Out of London Students and Transferring members, for whom it is difficult for them to travel to the Inn to attend in person events, unless otherwise stated in the event description on the website. Online events which are open to all are available and this will be clear in the event description. You are responsible for checking the event details before booking and meet the requirements of the event. Whilst there are some online events, those available to London students will predominantly take place at the Inn in person.

### Attendance Frequency

Whilst you can attend most sessions as often as you wish, some necessarily will be restricted. For example, you may be able to attend a given session many times but count the session as a QS only once (i.e. Prep4Practice); or there may be a cap on numbers for certain sessions. This is to ensure all students have a fair shot at gaining a well-balanced cross-section of QSs at reasonable cost. Restrictions on any given QS will be published on GIOS and the website.

GDL students are welcome and encouraged to participate in QSs whilst undertaking the conversion course. You can, with some exceptions, attend as many QSs as you wish, but you can only count 3 of them toward the 10 that are required for the purpose of Call.

There are some sessions, such as the Education Weekend Advocacy Course held in January and the Residential Advocacy & Ethics courses held in March and June that are restricted to full time and 2nd year part time BPTC students. This is down to capacity and the emphasis on mock trials. Students will need to have had some advocacy training before attending the courses.

You can moot as often as you wish, but you can only compete in the semi-final of our internal moot competition once.

**The Inn's website is the primary source of information regarding QSs, [see our website here](#), and you are strongly encouraged to keep up to date with the website content and ensure you keep the Inn informed of any changes to your email and mobile contact details. You should register attendance online using your GIOS account (Gray's Inn Online System).**

### Booking Your Qualifying Sessions

Registration times and specific dates for each QS can be found on GIOS and on the website calendar. The times will also be shown on your bar-coded QS ticket. Any changes that need to be made to timings, room locations, etc., will be highlighted via an email notice and published on GIOS and the website.

Some QSs cannot be booked online e.g. student residential weekends. For all such events, we will contact you well in advance with information on how to apply and/or register.

### QSs– the basics

- You must present your electronic ticket when you attend any QS at the Inn.
- The dress code is normally dark suits, white shirt (ties are worn) for all student members though some exceptions exist.
- Gowns are required for some QSs and can be collected (without charge) from the Robing Room.

- The Robing Rooms are in 10 South Square on the ground floor. Following a QS, please collect your belongings and return your gown before leaving.
- QSs will have a set time when you are able to depart, i.e. your QSs attendance will be recorded, and a set time when the event is over. These timings will be published on GIOS and the website.
- Where food for events is being provided and you have a food allergy, intolerance or special dietary requirements please make yourself known to the catering team.
- **It can take up to 30 days for your attendance at a given QS to be entered into your electronic record. If, after 30 days, your GIOS account does not reflect your attendance, please contact the Registrar.**

### **Students' Guests**

Normally there are only two categories of events to which you may invite guests – Guest Nights and Sunday Lunches. If you wish to invite guests, three is the maximum that you may invite to any one event. (NB: The Inn reserves the right to reduce the number of student guests allowed at any event. Notice will be given to students well in advance should this occur.) Guests should also wear dark suits or similar. Those that are not barrister members of the Inn, do not wear gowns.

Please contact Roberta Lai for QS and booking enquiries

[roberta.lai@graysinn.org.uk](mailto:roberta.lai@graysinn.org.uk)

Tel 020 7458 7808