



# Professional Skills Course Information Guide

Thank you for choosing BARBRI Altior for your Professional Skills Course (PSC). This information guide is intended to answer most, if not all, of your questions between now and completing your course.

Please read the information below carefully before attending the course.

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## Introduction to Professional Skills Course

The PSC is the compulsory course for trainee solicitors. It must be completed satisfactorily during a training contract in order to qualify as a solicitor.

The course consists of three core modules (Client Care & Professional Standards (CCPS), Financial & Business Skills (FBS) and Advocacy & Communication Skills (Advocacy) plus 24 hours of electives. Each core module builds on the foundations laid during the Legal Practice Course (LPC).

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## Confirmation of Booking

You will receive a confirmation email on booking. We advise you to keep a note of your Delegate ID, which is shown on the top right corner of the letter attached to the email, as this will be requested whenever you contact us.

Please be reminded that our Terms & Conditions apply to all bookings. Please see our website for full details: <http://www.altior.co.uk/terms-conditions>.

Please contact us if you have not yet received your LPC results at the time of booking your PSC and require further clarification of our related policy.

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## Joining Instructions / Course notes

Your joining instructions (including venue details, timings and preparation requirements) will be made available on our learning management system, MyKaplan, approximately three weeks before the start of each core module or elective. Here you will be able to download any documents you need prior to each date.

You will receive email notification when each core module or elective is available to view. To view the relevant information, you will need to log onto the portal at <https://www.mykaplan.co.uk/login>.

Please note that you will be provided with hard copies of all relevant course materials at the venue on the day, so you do not need to print these in advance.

Please contact our Delegate Services Team 029 2045 1000 if you have any issues with logging into the system or accessing the materials.

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## Absence & Transfers

If you know in advance that you cannot attend a date(s) of a core module or elective the course, you must provide us with a minimum of 28 days written notice by email or letter. If you discover within 28 days of a date that you are unable to attend, please contact Delegate Services immediately on 029 2045 1000, before writing to us.

You may transfer, subject to availability, to an alternative date(s) free of charge if we receive your transfer request at least 28 days before the start date of the course. Transfers requested within 28 days of the start date of the course, will also be subject to availability and will attract a transfer fee of £50.00 plus VAT for each day transferred.

In the case of a core module or elective involving a role allocation, a transfer fee of £100.00 plus VAT per day will apply to transfer requests received within 28 days of the start of that core module or elective. It is particularly important with this type of course that you avoid any late transfers, as last-minute drop-outs place an additional burden on the remaining delegates. Details of the relevant subjects (usually advocacy based) where roles are allocated are flagged on our website.

Please note that once a transfer fee has been incurred, it will only be waived in the case of proven illness (evidenced by a valid medical certificate sent to us within 7 days of your absence) or other exceptional circumstances. Please note that our courses are non-cancellable, and the full course fee will still stand.

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## Electives

You must undertake 24 hours of electives (unless you are a CILEx delegate or have been granted an exemption). Details of our electives would have been sent with your confirmation letter. Alternatively, you can find (and book) them via our website: <http://www.altior.co.uk>.

Most delegates tend to choose two topics and, for each of these, they will attend 6 hours of face-to-face tuition and undertake 6 hours of assessed associated distance learning.

Many of our electives are very popular and so you are advised to book as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to notify us of your elective choices.

### Preparation and Post-Coursework

Your Preparation and Post-Coursework will be made available to you on MyKaplan with your joining instructions. The Preparation is must be submitted 3 days before the elective date and the Post-Coursework, must be submitted within 14 days of the elective taking place.

Your submissions will be assessed by the trainer and you will be notified if there are any problems with your submission. You are therefore advised to keep an electronic copy of your submission in case you are asked to reproduce it at any time.

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## Special Requirements

If you have any special needs (including dyslexia), impairment or disability and require any assistance or a piece of equipment to be made available, please let us know immediately so that we can endeavour to accommodate your needs. Please note that we may not be able to meet your requirement if we are not given reasonable notice.

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## Arrival

Please arrive at the venue at least 10 minutes before the start of each day. The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) requires that a minimum of 6 hours face-to-face tuition must be completed each day and therefore arriving more than 30 minutes after the start time may result in the trainer refusing to admit you. Similarly, all delegates must stay until the end of each day. Please inform our Admin Team immediately on 029 2045 1000 if you are running late.

Upon arrival, your room will be sign posted on the venue's notice board.

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## Signing the Register

It is crucial that you sign the register for each course date you attend in order to satisfy the fire regulations at a venue and as subsequent proof that you have attended that day.

Please note that the SRA specifies that you must attend each core module and elective in its entirety and our accreditation stipulates that we can only issue a certificate of completion to those delegates who have attended the required number of hours.

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## Dress Code

There is no specified dress code for most core modules and electives, the exception being to advocacy-based courses which involve mock trials, so you should dress as if you were going to court. You will be notified in your joining instructions if this applies.

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## What to Bring

You will be provided with a full set of materials for each core module or elective at the venue. You therefore only need to bring writing equipment with you. You may also find post it notes and highlighter pens useful, particularly for marking-up the FBS materials in preparation for the open-book examination (see below for details of that).

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## Assessment Procedure

There is no formal assessment for CCPS, bar attendance and participation. Delegates will be assessed in FBS by way of a written examination and in Advocacy by way of participation in two mock trials.

The FBS assessment is a 90-minute unseen open-book examination split into two sections: section one consists of a series of multiple-choice questions; in section two, candidates must answer a series of short questions based on two case studies.

Full details of the examination format will be given to you during the FBS tuition, where you will have opportunity to sit a mock paper. This is also supplemented by our online revision module add-on, should you have opted for this.

### Appeals Procedure

Details of the appeals procedure will be made available to you on MyKaplan prior to the FBS tuition commencing.

### Mitigating Circumstances

Candidates who attend and complete an assessment will be presumed to be "fit to take the assessment" and evidence produced after the event in respect of circumstances existing before the assessment will not be accepted nor considered by the Exam Board. You will be required to sign a 'fit to sit form' prior to sitting the FBS examination.

It is a candidate's responsibility to notify us in advance of the assessment of any illness or personal circumstances (e.g. a close family bereavement) which may prevent them from performing to the best of their ability on the day. If appropriate, we can then plan to defer the candidate to a later date.

BARBRI Altior reserves the right to charge the candidate a fee for the deferred sitting in the absence of corroborating evidence. Full details of our "fit to take the assessment" and mitigating circumstances procedures will be made available to you on MyKaplan prior to the FBS tuition.

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## Results

FBS results in the form of pass/fail will be sent within 28 days of the exam date to the email address provided on booking (unless notified otherwise). You will not be provided with a percentage mark. For data protection reasons results cannot be given out over the telephone.

Please also note that examination results will not be disclosed until our fees have been paid in full.

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## Re-sits

Where a delegate fails the FBS examination, they may re-sit the examination element of this module up to two more times before the SRA requires them to re-attend the whole tuition module in addition to re-sitting the examination itself. For related re-sit fees please contact the Delegate Services team directly. Please note that a delegate will not be permitted to book a re-sit until they have received the result of their last attempt.

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## Completion - Certificate

We will issue you with a certificate, once you have satisfactorily attended all core modules and electives (and satisfied any distance learning requirements); passed any relevant assessments and any outstanding fees have been paid in full.

Please safeguard your certificate as you will need to submit it with your AD1 application form for admission to the roll. We charge a fee of £25.00 plus VAT for re-issuing any completion certificate.

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## Admission as a Solicitor

For you to be admitted to the roll as a solicitor, you must have completed the PSC, including all three core modules, 24 hours of electives and the FBS examination. You will also need to have completed your training contract. As already stated, you will be required for admission purposes.

When choosing your course dates, please bear in mind that your application for admission to the roll must be received by the SRA at least 28 days before your chosen admission date. Some of the distance learning elements of our electives may need to be completed after the course (e.g. if the course involves a Personal Development Plan). Other reasons for a possible delay in receiving your certificate include the need for us to convene an Exam Board to validate the FBS examination results and non-payment of our course fees.

Any unforeseen delays in your PSC may delay your admission and lead to you having to apply for an extension of your training contract.

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## Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high-level service to our clients and, therefore, if you are not happy with something, we want to know about it. This will help us improve our standards and prevent the problem recurring. In most instances, an issue can be easily resolved by discussing it with the person involved, or raising the matter with the trainer, Programme Leader or another member of BARBRI Altior staff.

However, if you would like to make a formal complaint, please refer to our complaints procedure which will be provided to you on MyKaplan.

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## Key Contacts

Contact our Delegate Services or Admin teams on [029 2045 1000](tel:02920451000) or by email at [infoaltior@barbri.com](mailto:infoaltior@barbri.com).

\*For Live Online Courses please refer to your Live Online Handbook.