

COURSE HANDBOOK

Introduction to Business Management



Institute of Barristers' Clerks

Study guide containing course structure, assessment criteria and the essay marking framework.

About this handbook

This course has been constructed to give you a basic understanding, and to widen your knowledge, of what is needed to be a barristers' clerk and the industry you work in. It has been designed to allow flexible working, with only one fixed training day - Module 2: Negotiation and Communication Skills, held as a group session in Central London.

The course is divided into three modules, each addressing a different subject and each contributing to your final mark. Please allow yourself quiet study time to learn: take your time reading the material supplied, follow the links provided for further reading and make notes as you go.

The majority of the course is conducted online through the eLearning platform, which guides you through each module in turn. Any work completed offline must be uploaded to the learner platform.

Three things to note before you start

- Modules 1 and 3 are eLearning and can be completed remotely, at your own pace.
- Module 2 is a single face-to-face training day; timings and location are confirmed in the course programme.
- You should aim to dedicate one to one and a half hours each week to your course to ensure you complete it on time.

The course at a glance

MODULE	DELIVERY	ASSESSMENT	PASS MARK	% OF TOTAL
1. The Legal and Professional Environment Four lessons	eLearning	100 multiple - choice questions, set at the end of each lesson. Two attempts allowed.	75 correct answers (75%)	30%
2. Negotiation and Communication Skills Two lessons · one fixed day	Face-to-face group session, Central London	Fees negotiation exercise - five questions, 20 points each, submitted online. Formal essay of 1,250 - 2,500 words, marked against the framework on pages 4 - 7.	60%	5%
3. The Work of Chambers, including Business Development Three lessons	eLearning	15 open questions spread across the lessons, graded 0 - 10 each.	6 points per question (90 points overall)	30%
OVERALL PASS MARK FOR THIS COURSE				65%

Module 1 · The Legal and Professional Environment

WHAT YOU WILL STUDY

- 1.1** An introduction to the court system of England and Wales.
- 1.2** The role of barristers, solicitors and chartered legal executives in the legal profession.
- 1.3** An introduction to types of civil dispute resolution, the function of the criminal justice system, legal funding and cost recovery.
- 1.4** An introduction to regulatory and professional conduct rules for clerks and for the wider legal profession.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Demonstrable general knowledge of the wider legal system of England and Wales.
- An understanding of the different roles of lawyers and how they work together.
- Knowledge of all types of dispute resolution, and how law is funded.
- An understanding of chambers and legal professional governance.

How this module is assessed. A multiple-choice questionnaire follows each of the four lessons - 100 questions in total, designed to test your ability to read and understand the text supplied. Some extra reading of external material is required via the embedded website links. You need 75 correct answers to pass and you have two attempts.

Module 2 · Negotiation and Communication Skills

WHAT YOU WILL STUDY

- 2.1** An introduction to working with people: written and verbal communication, dealing with difficult conversations, wellbeing, diversity and inclusion.
- 2.2** Principles of negotiating, including agreeing and collecting fees.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Communicate clearly and professionally, with a deep understanding of working with different types of people.
- Demonstrate written, research, business and conceptual skills.
- Understand the elements involved in commercial fee negotiation.

This is the one fixed day in the course. It is delivered in person in a group training room, facilitated by a professional trainer, and comprises presentations and delegate exercises. Because the training is face-to-face, the subject matter is covered in more detail than the eLearning modules allow. Two pieces of work are set during the day, and their timings and deadlines are confirmed before you leave.

TASK ONE · 5% OF THE COURSE

Fees negotiation exercise

A short exercise set during the training and submitted online. Five questions, 20 points each, testing your grasp of the information and considerations needed to master a fee negotiation. Pass mark 60%.

TASK TWO · 35% OF THE COURSE

Formal essay - 1,250 - 2,500 words

A formal essay on an element of the course, chosen by you from the list in the training material. The marking and assessment criteria are set out and discussed during the day so that every delegate understands how to achieve high marks. Pass mark 60%.

Module 3 · The Work of Chambers, Including Business Development

WHAT YOU WILL STUDY

- 3.1** Diary and administrative management.
- 3.2** Managing workload.
- 3.3** Networking and marketing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand workflow and chambers' administration systems.
- Have knowledge of the procedures of working with the CPS.
- Understand how barristers work and the pressures they face.
- Take a wider view of business development and how chambers promote themselves.
- Gain new skills in networking and rapport-building with clients.

This eLearning module is completed remotely, in your own time and at your own pace. Fifteen open questions are spread across the three lessons, each testing your understanding of the text supplied. Take your time and answer fully, each answer need only be a paragraph or two. Show your knowledge of the subject clearly and concisely. Each question is marked out of 10.

HOW EACH ANSWER IS MARKED	POINTS
The question was answered precisely - not too long or too short.	3
The learner's knowledge of the subject.	3
General standard of written English.	2
Extra information added that is not in the course text.	2
TOTAL PER QUESTION	10

Writing and submitting your essay

The essay carries 35% of the overall mark for the course, so it matters a great deal to your final result. You choose your subject from the list provided in the Module 2 training material, and the deadline is set when the task is set. All submissions are uploaded to the learner portal.

YOUR ESSAY MUST INCLUDE

- The course title, your name and the date. A formal structure, written in professional business language.
- A consistent language and layout style throughout - third person is the usual choice.
- Page numbers on every page.
- References where appropriate, using Harvard referencing, with a correctly formatted reference list or bibliography.
- Clear labels on any attached appendices.

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

- Work is submitted online, to the relevant assessment submission area, before 12:00 noon on the day specified.
- Uploaded files must be Word, Excel or PowerPoint documents only.
- Essays below the minimum word count, or more than 10% over the maximum word count, will not be marked. The framework allows a tolerance of $\pm 10\%$.
- Answers to open questions should be written to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject.
- Avoid plagiarism by referencing whenever you draw on someone else's work.

MODULE 2 · TASK TWO · 35% OF THE OVERALL MARK

Essay Assessment & Marking Framework

Assessment philosophy

The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the learner's understanding of the subject and their ability to apply that learning within barristers' chambers.

The assessment is designed to encourage professional thinking, evidence-based decision making and practical application rather than simply recalling information.

The highest performing learners will demonstrate:

- Excellent understanding of the subject.
- Application of theory to professional practice.
- Independent thinking.
- Critical evaluation rather than description.
- Balanced arguments supported by credible research.
- Demonstrable research from outside the course content.
- Clear, professional written communication.

Assessment criteria

ASSESSMENT AREA	MARKS	WHAT THE LEARNER MUST DEMONSTRATE
1. Understanding the Brief	10	Answers the question throughout, remains focused on the title, meets the required word count (within $\pm 10\%$) and follows all submission requirements.
2. Structure & Presentation	15	Professionally presented, logical structure, clear headings, excellent grammar and spelling, effective paragraphing and readability. Tables, diagrams or appendices should only be included where they genuinely enhance the discussion.
3. Introduction	10	Clearly introduces the topic, explains its importance and outlines the argument that will be explored.
4. Knowledge & Professional Application	20	Demonstrates detailed understanding of the subject and consistently applies the discussion to barristers' chambers using realistic examples and commercial awareness.
5. Critical Thinking & Analysis	25	Evaluates ideas rather than simply describing them. Considers alternative viewpoints, demonstrates independent thinking and reaches balanced, well-reasoned conclusions.
6. Research & Referencing	10	Demonstrates quality research using a range of authoritative sources from both within and beyond the legal profession. All sources must be referenced correctly using Harvard referencing throughout the essay.
7. Conclusion	10	Draws together the discussion, answers the essay question directly and demonstrates how the evidence supports the final conclusions.
TOTAL		100 MARKS



Performance descriptors

ASSESSMENT AREA 1 · 10 MARKS

1. Understanding the Brief

9-10 Fully answers the question, remains focused throughout and meets all submission requirements.

7-8 Answers the question well with only minor deviation.

5-6 Partially answers the question but loses focus at times.

3-4 Limited relevance to the question.

0-2 Does not adequately answer the question.

ASSESSMENT AREA 2 · 15 MARKS

2. Structure & Presentation

13-15 Exceptionally well organised, professional presentation, excellent English and virtually error free.

10-12 Well organised with only minor presentation or grammatical errors.

7-9 Generally clear but inconsistent organisation or several grammatical errors.

4-6 Poor structure affecting readability.

0-3 Difficult to follow or poorly presented.

ASSESSMENT AREA 3 · 10 MARKS

3. Introduction

9-10 Excellent introduction that clearly establishes the purpose and argument.

7-8 Good introduction with clear direction.

5-6 Adequate but lacks clarity or focus.

3-4 Weak introduction.

0-2 Little or no meaningful introduction.



Performance descriptors

ASSESSMENT AREA 4 · 20 MARKS

4. Knowledge & Professional Application

- 18-20** Outstanding knowledge, consistently applied to barristers' chambers with practical examples, commercial awareness and professional insight.
- 15-17** Very good knowledge with relevant practical application.
- 11-14** Good understanding but lacking depth or practical examples.
- 7-10** Basic understanding with limited application.
- 0-6** Significant gaps in understanding.

ASSESSMENT AREA 5 · 25 MARKS

5. Critical Thinking & Analysis

- 22-25** Excellent evaluation throughout. Challenges assumptions, weighs competing viewpoints and demonstrates original, independent thinking.
- 18-21** Very good evaluation with balanced discussion and well-supported conclusions.
- 14-17** Sound discussion but mainly descriptive with limited evaluation.
- 10-13** Basic discussion with little analysis.
- 0-9** Descriptive only with unsupported assertions.

ASSESSMENT AREA 6 · 10 MARKS

6. Research & Referencing

- 9-10** Excellent range of authoritative sources from inside and outside the legal profession. Accurate and consistent **Harvard** referencing throughout, including a correctly formatted reference list or bibliography.
- 7-8** Good range of reliable sources with only minor referencing errors.
- 5-6** Limited range of sources or inconsistent referencing.
- 3-4** Very little supporting research or significant referencing errors.
- 0-2** Little or no evidence of research and no acceptable referencing.

Performance descriptors

ASSESSMENT AREA 7 · 10 MARKS

7. Conclusion

9-10 Excellent synthesis of the discussion with a convincing answer to the essay question.

7-8 Good conclusion that summarises the discussion effectively.

5-6 Adequate conclusion but largely repeats earlier points.

3-4 Weak conclusion.

0-2 No meaningful conclusion.

Overall performance standards

90–100	Outstanding Professional Standard
80–89	Advanced Professional Standard
70–79	Proficient Professional Standard
60–69	Competent Professional Standard
Below 60	Further Development Required

Using AI and getting help

This guidance has been produced to help every learner achieve the highest possible marks for their essay.

You are welcome to use AI tools to support the preparation and writing of your essay if you believe they will be helpful. However, AI should be used as an aid rather than a substitute for your own knowledge, understanding and critical thinking. Essays that rely too heavily on AI-generated content are unlikely to achieve the highest marks, as the assessment criteria reward original analysis, personal insight and the application of learning.

If anything is unclear, please ask.

Your course facilitators are there to help with the material, the platform and your deadlines.

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