COURSE HANDBOOK

Advanced 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 commissioned by the Institute of Barristers' Clerks and accredited by the Chartered Management Institute, specifically for barristers' clerks to support their career development. It addresses various aspects of the profession, broadening your knowledge of the role of a barristers' clerk and the wider industry, while supporting your progression into more senior positions.

The course is divided into four modules, each addressing a different subject and contributing to your final mark. It has been designed to allow flexible working, with only one fixed training day - Module 4: Leadership Development, held as a group session in Central London. The majority of the course is delivered online through the eLearning platform, which guides you through each module in turn. Any work completed offline must be uploaded to the learner platform. Although the course is largely administered online, the course facilitators are available to provide help and support throughout your studies.

Please allow yourself sufficient quiet study time to work through the course materials. Take your time reading the material provided, follow the links for further reading, and make notes as you progress through each module.

Recommended study timeline & the course at a glance

DELIVERY	MODULE	LESSONS	TASK
Aim to finish before the classroom day - 22 weeks	**0. Introduction to the course**	Course discussion	Remote meeting only
	1. Business development eLearning	**1.1** Business development	Five questions to be answered
		1.2 Marketing	Complete branding exercise and write a basic marketing plan
		1.3 Building professional networks	Short essay, 1,000-1,500 words
		1.4 Client collaboration	Five questions to be answered
	2. Practice Management eLearning	**2.1** Practice development meetings	Complete documents supplied for a PDM
		2.2 Managing staff within chambers	Five questions to be answered
	3. Chambers Management eLearning	**3.1** Governance	Multiple choice questions
		3.2 Finance	Multiple choice questions
Aim to finish before the end of the year - 10 weeks	**4. Leadership Development** Classroom Day	**4.1** Know yourself and others around you	1,250–2,500-word essay
Aim to start booking these in January	**One-to-one remote via Zoom x3 sessions**	**4.2** Personal change management and development	Conducted remotely via Zoom - 30 to 60 mins each session. These should be booked 3-4 weeks apart.
All work must be submitted by 1st May.	**eLearning**		Five questions to be answered

Three things to note before you start

- Modules 1 - 3 are eLearning and can be completed remotely, at your own pace.
- Module 4 opens with a single face-to-face training day, followed by three one-to-one remote sessions arranged at times convenient to you. For overseas students the training day can be delivered remotely.
- You should aim to dedicate approximately three to four hours per week to your course. At this pace, you can expect to complete the course within 10 months. You may complete it sooner if you wish; however, 12 months is the maximum time allowed.

Module 1 · Business Development

WHAT YOU WILL STUDY

1.1 Business development: principles of business development, the psychology of buying, business development styles, customer service and the client journey, and client entertaining.

1.2 Marketing: client buying cycles, client buying shortcuts, social media and writing LinkedIn posts, chambers' branding, planning a marketing campaign and data management.

1.3 Building professional networks: basic principles, importance and benefits, personal motivation, networking anxieties and confidence-building, tools, practicalities and etiquette, and developing your personal magnetism.

1.4 Client collaboration: how to make clients come back for more, and negotiation for business development.

HOW EACH LESSON IS ASSESSED

- **1.1** Five open questions to be answered.
- **1.2** A branding exercise and write a basic marketing plan.
- **1.3** A short essay of 1,000 – 1,500 words.
- **1.4** Five open questions to be answered.

Module 2 · Practice Management

WHAT YOU WILL STUDY

2.1 Practice development meetings: preparation and the human factors to consider, business goals and expectations, setting objectives, tracking and measuring, progression and feedback, and silk applications.

2.2 Managing staff within chambers: organisational motivation, staff performance management, staff appraisals, and legal requirements, compliance and resources.

2.3 Building and presenting business plans: writing a business development strategy for chambers, and presenting to clients, members or colleagues.

HOW EACH LESSON IS ASSESSED

- **2.1** Completion of the documents supplied for a practice development meeting.
- **2.2** Five open questions to be answered.
- **2.3** Two worksheets to complete.to be answered.

Module 3 · Chambers Management

WHAT YOU WILL STUDY

3.1 Governance: chambers' structure and governance, and legislative and regulatory compliance.

3.2 Finance: chambers' finance, budgeting and cashflow, and funding contracts and fee collection.

HOW EACH LESSON IS ASSESSED

- **3.1** Multiple-choice questions, answered and submitted online.
- **3.2** Multiple-choice questions, answered and submitted online
- Each question carries two points towards the final mark. The pass mark is 80% and you have two attempts.

Module 4 · Leadership Development

WHAT YOU WILL STUDY

4.1 Know yourself and others around you: leadership in the chambers' sector, personal branding, management and leadership personality traits, and relationship building. Delivered on the classroom day.

4.2 Personal change management and development: personal change management, and business mentoring and coaching. Delivered one to one, remotely.

HOW EACH LESSON IS ASSESSED

- **4.1** A formal essay of 1,250 – 2,500 words.
- **4.2** Five open questions to be answered.

This is the one fixed day in the course. It is delivered in person in a group training room in Central London 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. Three one-to-one remote sessions are then set up with each delegate, planned at times convenient to you.

You will also be required to complete an online personality profile, which must be submitted **two weeks before the training day.**

TASK ONE

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.

TASK TWO

Five open questions

Set as part of your one-to-one sessions on personal change management, mentoring and coaching. Submit answers that demonstrate your full knowledge of the subject; two or three paragraphs are sufficient for each question.

Writing and submitting your work

Two essays are set on this course: a short essay of 1,000 – 1,500 words in lesson 1.3, and a formal essay of 1,250 – 2,500 words in lesson 4.1. All submissions are uploaded to the learner portal.

YOUR SUBMISSION 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, data or graphs.

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 ±10%.
- Answers to open questions should be written to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject.
- Keep your own copy of everything you submit, in case of unlikely IT failures.
- Avoid plagiarism by referencing whenever you draw on someone else's work.

MODULE 4 · ESSAY SUBMISSION MARKING

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 ±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. Criticalthinking & 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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