



The Council of the Inns of Court

Role Description and Person Specification Inns' Qualifying Session External Observer

External Observers (EOs) are appointed by the Council of the Inns of Court (COIC) on behalf of the four Inns of Court (the Inns). EOs will provide constructive feedback regarding the provision of Qualifying Sessions (Qs) with a view to identifying areas of best practice and areas for improvement for inclusion in an annual report.

The Inns of Court and Qualifying Sessions

Qs form a vital part of a student's journey in training to become a barrister. All Bar students are required to be members of an Inn. Qs, provide opportunities for professional and ethical development which complements and builds on a student's academic and vocational education and forms a bridge to the final component of Bar training; pupillage. Qs also provide opportunities for a student to enhance their understanding of the role of barristers in the wider justice system and the rule of law.

Qs deliver high quality education in a context where those learning are exposed to the Inns' community of practitioners and experts thereby reinforcing their learning. The Qs come in many forms including on-line, in-person and residential events.

The Role

EOs will be assigned to observe Qs delivered by an Inn for a period of one academic year. At the end of each year EOs will rotate to observe the Qs of a different Inn. The post is offered for an initial term of 4 years with possible renewal for a further 2 year term.

It is envisaged that the attendance requirement will be equivalent to 7 days over the course of each academic year. EOs will produce feedback reports after each Qs event attended and an annual year-end report (templates will be provided). EOs will also meet with students to gather feedback on the Qs programme as a whole both at the start and at the end of the academic year.

The Council of the Inns of Court

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Limited by Guarantee

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Charity Number: 1155640
Registered Office:
9 Gray's Inn Square, London WC1R 5JD

Attendance will be required at an induction programme which will normally be held in either September or October in the first year of appointment. This initial induction programme will include sessions collectively with both EOs and individually with the Inn the EO is assigned to. In each subsequent year the EO will attend induction sessions just at the new Inn they are assigned to.

Accountability

Accountable to: the Nominated Officer of COIC

Key Relationship: the Nominated Officer at the respective Inn

Role Description

- To observe and provide independent and impartial feedback on a cross section of QSs reflecting a range of themes and delivery formats.
- To be familiar with the Inn's most recent annual Self-evaluation Report, which will include previous EO annual reports and to be aware of actions taken in response to recommendations made.
- To attend a cross section of 4 QS events during each academic year as well as one weekend residential course.
- Towards the start and end of the academic cycle to chair a meeting of students, the aim being to provide a supportive environment within which student expectations and experience can be considered and to gather general feedback.
- To write reports of observations and student feedback including evidenced, constructive and proportionate recommendations and to deliver these to the Inn within 10 days of the event.
- To submit by the end of June each year an annual report to the Inn. This report will inform the Self-evaluation Report which the respective Inn will submit annually to the Bar Standards Board.
- To provide feedback to COIC on the EO process.
- To meet the requirements and deadlines agreed with the Inn and to maintain open and regular communication with its nominated members of staff.
- To be aware of and be able to reference the four BSB principles underpinning Bar training and the components of the BSB Professional Statement.

Person Specification

The External Observer:

- is able to demonstrate a good understanding of quality assurance mechanisms;
- has an awareness of the regulatory landscape;
- has direct experience of a profession where skills training is a key element of the operational workings;
- will comply with the Inns' and COIC rules relating to data protection;
- is able to maintain independence and to identify and take appropriate action in dealing with conflicts of interest and maintain confidentiality where appropriate;
- can evidence, through personal and/or professional development, an understanding of the principles around equality, diversity and inclusion and the risks of unconscious bias;
- has experience of writing reports for committees or Boards;
- has a track record of putting views across clearly, constructively and sensitively taking into account responsibilities and expertise of others;
- has a track record of fostering collaborative relationships built on trust and respect;
- has the ability to facilitate group discussions;
- has the ability to work to deadlines;
- is willing and able to attend QS events during the evening and over the course of weekends in locations across the country.

Remuneration

EOs will receive an annual fee of £2,450 payable in three instalments.

It is estimated that on average EOs will attend 1 day of induction, 4 evening QSS, two student meetings and a 2 ½ day residential weekend. We calculate this to be the equivalent of 7 days of attendance.

All reasonable travel and subsistence costs will be met in accordance with each Inn's policies.

Ordinarily only standard class travel and budget accommodation will be reimbursed.

March 2024