



The Inns of
Court College
of Advocacy

Recognition of Prior Learning and Prior Experience Policy

Version 2.0

Introduction

This policy applies to all applicants to the ICCA Bar Course and it provides a central policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and/or Recognition of Prior Experience (RPE) of students by the ICCA. It should be read in conjunction with the ICCA Fair Admissions Policy and the published entry requirements for the ICCA Bar Course as set out on the ICCA website.

The ICCA will recruit students with the greatest academic ability and potential, irrespective of their social, cultural and economic background. The ICCA is committed to equality in education and applications are considered on their individual merits based wholly on the information provided by the applicant through the application process.

The ICCA will implement fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices and aims to offer clear advice and guidance to prospective applicants to enable them to make informed choices.

Definitions

RPL is the process whereby students can be given credit on the ICCA Bar Course for previous learning.

RPE is the process whereby students can be given credit on the ICCA Bar Course for previous experience.

'Prior Learning' is previous study with an educational organisation which has been formally assessed and certified.

'Prior Experience' is non-certified acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge, gained through considerable experience or exceptional ability in an academic, professional, business, or administrative field.

'Graduate Diploma in Law', 'GDL' 'law conversion course' and 'equivalent qualification' means a course which incorporates study of the foundations of legal knowledge subjects as required under Part 2A (A1) of the [Bar Qualification Manual](#) and complies with the [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Law \(Jul 2015\)](#), or other Bar Standards Board minimum requirements as applicable at the date of application. The most common type of conversion course is a Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL).

'Authorised Education and Training Organisation' (AETO) is an organisation so authorised by the Bar Standards Board (BSB) to provide the vocational component of Bar training.

'Certificate of Academic Standing' (CAS) means a Certificate of Academic Standing awarded by the Bar Standards Board (BSB).

Scope

This document sets out the ICCA policy in relation to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Recognition of Prior Experience (RPE) to the ICCA Bar Course.

The ICCA recognises RPL/RPE as follows:

1. **RPL towards Part One of the ICCA Bar Course - Exemption and Credit Transfer.** The ICCA recognises RPL from previous study on a recognised Bar Vocational Training course

provided by an AETO towards Part One of the ICCA Bar Course. There is no RPL towards credit for any of the modules on Part Two of the Bar Course. All evidence of achievement must be dated within three years of the applicant's anticipated commencement date with the ICCA¹; and/or,

2. **RPL/RPE towards ICCA Bar Course entry requirements - Certificates of Academic Standing.** The ICCA recognises RPE/RPL towards meeting the academic entry criteria for the ICCA Bar Course through the holding of a valid Certificate of Academic Standing (CAS) awarded by Bar Standards Board (BSB). A CAS alone does not meet the minimum entry requirements to the ICCA Bar Course. Applicants will also be required by the time of enrolment to have passed a law conversion course to the required standard.

RPL towards Part One of the ICCA Bar Course

Certificated credit obtained from another Authorised Education and Training Organisation (AETO) can be recognised towards the individual modules of Part One of the ICCA Bar Course only.

Applicants will be considered for RPL if they can provide a valid transcript demonstrating achievement of one or both of the following Bar Course modules:

- **Part One, Module 1:** Criminal Litigation, Evidence and Sentencing;
- **Part One, Module 2:** Civil Litigation, Evidence and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

The ICCA can only consider applications for RPL where the applicant has passed the module relied upon as Prior Learning (Module 1 and/or Module 2) at either the first or second sitting of the assessment (not including any sitting discounted due to mitigating circumstances).

The ICCA can only consider applications for RPL where the final results for each module relied upon as Prior Learning are dated within three years of their anticipated start date of that part of the ICCA Bar Course as applicable to that applicant, i.e. within three years of commencement of Part Two where the applicant is exempted from both Part One modules, or within three years of Part One, where the applicant is exempted from a single module only.

If granted, exemption and credit transfer will be for 20 credits at Level 7 for Module 1 and/or 20 credits at Level 7 for Module 2. Exemption and credits will be recognised by the ICCA's Academic Partner towards the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Bar Practice.

Complete exemption (i.e. exemption from both Modules 1 and 2) would permit applicants to proceed directly to Part Two of the ICCA Bar Course, provided that the applicant has joined an Inn of Court by the commencement of Part Two. Partial exemption (i.e. exemption from a single module) would require the applicant to complete the module outstanding. The ICCA requires students to pass Part One assessments at the first or second sitting (excluding sittings discounted due to mitigating circumstances) as a condition of proceeding to Part Two.

Applicants wishing to rely upon Prior Learning for full or partial exemption from Part One of the ICCA Bar Course must still apply for the full programme within published application dates, meet

¹ Although the Bar Standards Board BSB place a five-year validity period on exams, a three-year limit has been imposed for pedagogical reasons and to ensure the candidate has a reasonable opportunity to apply for pupillage after the course, whilst all qualifications remain valid.

all programme entry criteria and, if shortlisted, pass the selection day events to the standard required to receive an offer of admission.

There is no credit transfer offered by the ICCA or the ICCA's Academic Partner towards the following modules in Part Two of the ICCA Bar Course:

- **Part Two Modules 1- 3: Advocacy**
- **Part Two Module 4: Opinion Writing**
- **Part Two Module 5: Drafting**
- **Part Two Module 6: Conference Skills**
- **Part Two Module 7: Professional Ethics**

Requests for Credit Transfer RPL are managed through the standard ICCA Bar Course admissions process as published on the ICCA website and outlined in the Fair Admissions Policy. Applicants who are invited to an ICCA Bar Course Selection Event will be expected to provide evidence of their successful completion of the Part One course module(s) in the form of a valid transcript. Students receive no advantage or disadvantage in the overall admissions process by reason of having already passed these modules with another AETO.

All Credit Transfer RPL requests will be managed by the ICCA Registry Office with RPL decisions made on behalf of the ICCA Dean by a senior member of ICCA academic staff. Complaints and Appeals will be in accordance with the procedures at Annexes A and B of the Fair Admissions Policy.

RPL/RPE towards the ICCA Bar Course entry requirements

The ICCA recognises RPE/RPL towards meeting the academic entry criteria for the ICCA Bar Course only through a candidate holding a valid Certificate of Academic Standing (CAS) awarded by Bar Standards Board (BSB).

Candidates within the following categories are required to obtain a CAS by enrolment on the ICCA Bar Course:

- 1) Students with degrees from outside the UK/Republic of Ireland who wish to undertake the GDL must apply to the BSB for a Certificate of Academic Standing.
- 2) Students with UK/Republic of Ireland postgraduate degrees where no UK/ Republic of Ireland undergraduate degree is held must also apply to the BSB for a Certificate of Academic Standing. Students who hold UK medical, dental or veterinary degrees should contact the BSB's [Authorisations Team](#) for further advice.
- 3) Students who do not hold any degree qualifications may apply to the BSB for a Certificate of Academic Standing based on considerable experience or exceptional ability in an academic, professional, business, or administrative field.
- 4) The BSB will issue a Certificate of Academic Standing if it is satisfied that the qualifications held and/or experience gained by the student are equivalent to a UK honours degree of at least lower second class (2:2).

- 5) The BSB refers to the general comparability statements prepared by [UK NARIC](#) when assessing overseas degree qualifications. UK NARIC is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. It performs this official function on behalf of the UK Government.
- 6) A Certificate of Academic Standing issued by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) does not certify eligibility to undertake the GDL for the purpose of qualification as a barrister.

CAS applications are made direct to the BSB and not to the ICCA. The ICCA takes no part in the CAS application process.

Candidates with a CAS must also, by the time of enrolment, have successfully passed to the required standard a law conversion course, such as the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) or equivalent qualification. A candidate exempted from all or part of the GDL or equivalent must provide a certificate of exemption from the Bar Standards Board. For further information candidates should refer to the ICCA Bar Course entrance criteria and the ICCA Fair Admissions Policy. Please note that time limits apply between completion of the Academic Stage of training and commencing the Vocational Stage of training.

RPL/RPE towards entry requirements is managed through the standard ICCA Bar Course application process, as set out on the ICCA website and outlined in the Fair Admissions Policy. The applicant will be required to provide evidence in the form of a valid CAS. Applicants will receive no advantage or disadvantage in the overall admissions process where a CAS is relied upon.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed in the first instance by Dean of the ICCA and revised in light of changes in legislation and the strategic priorities of the ICCA, by the ICCA Education Committee, as directed by its Governors. If you have any enquiries regarding this policy, please direct them to info@icca.ac.uk for the attention of the ICCA Head of Programmes.