



# ICCA Bar Course Selection Days 2023

## Instructions for Advocacy Exercise and Interview

### Welcome

Congratulations on being shortlisted for a place on the ICCA Bar Course. You will by now have booked your selection day and will be shortly attending for an online advocacy exercise and interview. We are looking forward to meeting you.

These instructions are provided at least 24 hours in advance to give you sufficient time to prepare. In the interests of fairness to all candidates, under no circumstances should you share this document with others or discuss your selection appointment with others.

Below you will find instructions for your advocacy exercise and interview. It is worth bearing in mind that no specific preparation is required for your interview.

The ICCA has a Fair Admissions Policy, which means that we do not take into account details of your school or university attended, or your protected characteristics. All assessors are trained by an external consultant in equality and diversity and unconscious bias avoidance. When you meet your assessor, (s)he will know nothing about your background and will not have a copy of your answers to the online questionnaire used in your initial application to the ICCA. This provides a level playing field for all candidates and the focus of the day will be you.

Even though this is a selective process, please expect a friendly welcome from your assessor. If you are able, you will find it helpful to attend your welcome session run by Lynda Gibbs QC (Hon), Dean of the ICCA, and other ICCA staff. You will then be ready to attend your timetabled session. Many of our current students have thoroughly enjoyed the selection day you are soon to attend and we very much hope that you have a similarly positive experience.

### Instructions and questions for Advocacy Exercise

Your advocacy exercise will consist of spending up to **10 minutes** answering **ONE** of the questions below. The choice of which question you answer is yours. You do not need to notify the ICCA in advance of your selection day which question you have chosen and the assessor will not know in advance which of the questions you have chosen to answer, although (s)he will ask you when you meet via Zoom.



How you go about answering the question you choose is a matter entirely for you. How much research or otherwise you choose to do is also a matter entirely for you. Please remember that this is an exercise in **persuasion**, so think in advance what your ultimate **answer** is, how you will **structure** your argument and what information you will use to **support** it.

You are entitled to take notes and to use them as a memory aid during this exercise, although it is useful to bear in mind that persuasive oral advocacy should involve you engaging with the audience (the assessor) and simply reading from a script will detract from your performance significantly.

The assessor may ask you questions. These could be during your performance and/or after you have finished. Please be aware that questions are designed to elicit more information from you and not to interfere with your performance.

This exercise is not assessed on what your answer is and there is not intended to be a right or wrong answer. Rather, the advocacy exercise is assessed against the skill headings of **Analysis** and **Effective Communication** and the criteria listed under each. You can find these below. Please ensure that you have considered these criteria in advance of this exercise.

## Advocacy questions (choose one)

- *The UK courts rely far more on oral advocacy than pretty much every other country in the world. Written submissions and pleadings are perfectly capable of conveying even the most nuanced arguments. Is it about time that the UK courts adopt a new approach where oral advocacy becomes the exception rather than the rule?*
- *'Justice delayed is justice denied' is a well-known legal maxim, yet chronic delays are crippling the criminal justice system. If we assume both that the maxim is correct and reducing the delays is no more than a dubious aspiration, what can be done to achieve justice for the accused, witnesses and victims of crime?*
- *There is no system of inquiry that can guarantee whether a witness is telling the truth, or is otherwise lying or mistaken. Should we accept that any case relying on the unsupported evidence of a single witness is liable to result in a miscarriage of justice?*



## Advocacy criteria

### Analysis

Criteria:

- *Effectively assimilates written or spoken information.*
- *Distinguishes between relevant facts and irrelevant information so as to identify the real issues.*
- *Provides justification for views or arguments advanced without making unwarranted assumptions.*
- *Ability to identify and focus on achieving a solution to a given problem.*

### Effective Communication

Criteria:

- *Is clear and understandable.*
- *Structures communication to aid understanding.*
- *Presents complex points simply and accurately.*
- *Builds strong, logical arguments.*
- *Adapts style and language to the needs of the audience.*
- *Delivers arguments or views with confidence and impact.*

## Instructions for Interview

Following your advocacy exercise, the same assessor will interview you. Your interview will last for up to **10 minutes**.

We do not provide you with interview questions beforehand, but you will be pleased to hear that there is no preparation for you to do in advance of the interview and you will not be facing legal problems during the interview process. The interview is designed to find out more about you and the criteria we assess you against during the interview are set out below. Please ensure that you read these before you attend for your selection day.

## Interview criteria

### Motivation

Criteria:

- *Demonstrates motivation and commitment to qualifying as a barrister.*
- *Identifies a personal key skill or attribute and why this would be useful in practice at the Bar.*
- *Demonstrates an understanding of the profession.*



### Judgment & Integrity

Criteria:

- *Demonstrates integrity.*
- *Ability to make considered decisions and reach sensible conclusions.*
- *Inspires trust and confidence.*

### Effective Communication

Criteria:

- *Is clear and understandable.*
- *Structures communication to aid understanding.*
- *Presents complex points simply and accurately.*
- *Builds strong, logical arguments.*
- *Adapts style and language to the needs of the audience.*
- *Delivers arguments or views with confidence and impact.*

We look forward to seeing you very soon.

With my best wishes,

Chris Kessling  
ICCA Vice-Dean

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