

King's Inns was formally established in 1541. It derives its name from King Henry VIII who was instrumental in ensuring that a lease of the lands at Inns Quay (where the Four Courts are now located) was transferred to the benchers. By the end of the 19th century, the government of the day decided that it needed a building in which to house courts and so, in 1800, the noted architect, James Gandon, having just completed the Four Courts building, was commissioned to design the present buildings on Constitution Hill. Henceforward, these would be the headquarters of the Benchers and the School of Law. The primary focus of the school is the training of barristers.

The Honorable Society of King's Inns comprises benchers, barristers and students. The benchers include all the judges of the Supreme and High Courts and a number of elected barristers.

The School of Law at King's Inns is the oldest institution of legal education in Ireland. Its reputation is international with a long list of eminent graduates including former presidents of Ireland and of other countries, taoisigh, politicians and, of course, judges and barristers in practice throughout the English speaking world.

The Law Students' Debating Society at King's Inns is a leader in debating and mooting. The students organise a number of in-house moots and debates throughout the academic year; national and international debates and moots are also encouraged and supported. King's Inns students edit the well-established Irish Students' Law Review.



THE WORK OF THE BARRISTER

SERVING JUSTICE

The nature of law is such that the majority of people have contact with a barrister once or twice in their lifetime, yet the issues requiring such contact are nearly always life-changing. It may be that a life-long relationship has ended, a business is under threat, that liberty or reputation is at stake, or that some personal right has been denied. It is therefore vital that barristers are trained to the highest standards and possess the skills and knowledge to present the client's case effectively and persuasively. The core ethics of the profession require independence and universal availability, with barristers advocating for a client without regard to their own interests or any consequences to themselves or any other person.

WORK OF BARRISTERS

The main role of barristers lies in pleading cases in the Supreme, High, Circuit and District Courts. However, barristers also perform a number of other important functions. They represent individuals and organisations that appear before public enquiries and tribunals. They give advice on legal matters, draft legal documents and give expert legal opinions on particular issues.

Some barristers specialise in specific areas of law - Criminal, Commercial or Family Law, for example. Others attach themselves to particular circuits outside Dublin (a circuit is the area of one or more counties in which a particular judge presides).

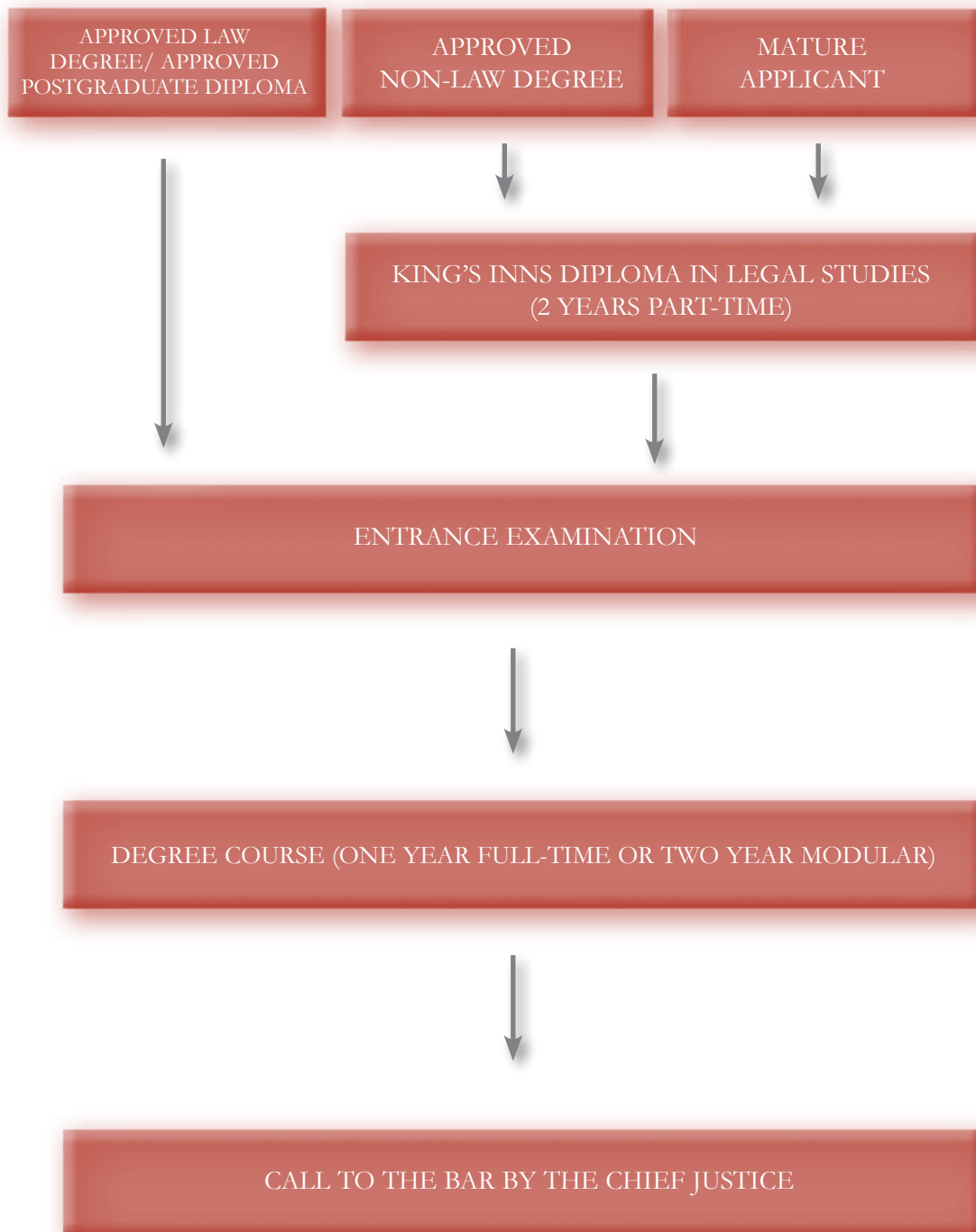
THE BAR IN IRELAND

There are several thousand qualified barristers in Ireland, many of whom are employed in the public service and in industry. Approximately 2000 are members of the Law Library with more than 1750 working in Dublin and 100 based in Cork; a further 150 work on court circuits based outside Dublin and Cork. There are about 1725 junior counsel and 275 senior counsel.

A junior counsel becomes a senior counsel by applying "to take silk" usually after at least 15 years experience as a junior. If the application is approved by the government, having already been considered by the Chief Justice and the Attorney General who liaise with the Chairman of the Bar Council, the barrister is called to the Inner Bar by the Chief Justice and becomes a senior counsel.

Senior counsel usually specialise in particular areas of the law and give more time to the preparation and presentation of cases in court and to providing specialised legal opinions. Senior counsel generally practise in the High Court and Supreme Court.

BECOMING A BARRISTER





DIPLOMA IN LEGAL STUDIES

The Diploma in Legal Studies is the first stage of training for those who do not have approved law degrees. The course takes place in the evenings and on alternate Saturday mornings over a two-year period, at the end of which successful candidates are conferred with the Diploma in Legal Studies and are eligible to sit the entrance examination for the Barrister-at-Law degree course.

The primary aim of the diploma course is to enable students to acquire the knowledge and understanding of substantive law appropriate for practice at the Bar and to equip them to go on to participate fully in the Barrister-at-Law degree course. The course also aims to enable those who do not wish to pursue a professional legal qualification to acquire a knowledge and understanding of substantive law and legal skills that will be of use in employment in the public service, private sector or provision of services.

The following categories of applicants are considered for entrance to the diploma course:

GRADUATE APPLICANT - holder of an approved degree (other than an approved degree in law) from a third-level educational institution. Degrees conferred by foreign educational institutions may also suffice. The Education Committee, in each case, determines whether a particular foreign degree is acceptable.

Places are allocated by the Education Committee based on academic merit in accordance with detailed criteria established from time to time by the Committee.

MATURE APPLICANT - applicant who does not hold an approved degree and is at least 25 years of age on May 1st in the year in which he/she would sit the examination for Diploma – Part 1. Consideration is given to (a) academic and professional qualifications and (b) occupation and work experience.

THE COURSE

The academic year begins in mid-September and ends in May. It comprises 28 weeks of lectures and tutorials with vacations at Christmas and Easter and ends with the annual examinations. Lectures and tutorials take place on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and on alternate Saturday mornings. Attendance is compulsory.

Part 1 (First Year)

1. Introduction to the Legal System
2. Public Law 1 (Constitutional Law)
3. Law of Contract
4. Law of Tort
5. Criminal Law
6. Land Law (including the law of succession)
7. Family Law

Part 2 (Second Year)

1. Public Law 2 (Human Rights Law and Administrative Law)
2. Equity and Trusts
3. Law of the EU
4. Law of Evidence
5. Company Law
6. Jurisprudence

The annual examination takes place in May when students sit a paper in each of the subjects studied that year. The standard of the examinations is the same as that obtaining in the universities.



ENTRANCE EXAMINATION AND ADMISSION TO THE BARRISTER-AT-LAW DEGREE COURSE

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

Admission as a student to the degree course is by an entrance examination. To be eligible to sit this examination a candidate must have submitted a satisfactory student admission declaration together with a transcript of all degree/diploma results on or before 7 July in the year in which an applicant intends to sit the examination and hold either an approved law degree/approved postgraduate diploma or the Society's Diploma in Legal Studies. The student admission declaration can be found in the prospective student area of www.kingsinns.ie.

The list of approved law degrees may also be found at www.kingsinns.ie

The applicant must show that, in the course leading to the approved degree/postgraduate diploma, he/she has passed the following core subjects as required by the Society:

- Land Law (including the Law of Succession)
- Equity
- Jurisprudence
- Company Law
- Law of the European Union
- Administrative Law

Applicants who have not taken one or more of the above subjects as part of an approved law degree or approved postgraduate diploma may be permitted to compensate by passing the Society's diploma examination in those subjects.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Forms for the entrance examination together with the student admission declaration are available in the prospective student area of www.kingsinns.ie. The application form should be submitted electronically. The student admission declaration must be signed and delivered to King's Inns.

THE EXAMINATION

The subjects for the entrance examination are as follows:

- Contract Law
- Criminal Law
- Irish Constitutional Law
- Law of Torts
- Law of Evidence

The syllabus, reading list and past examination papers can be found on the website.

All candidates should be familiar with the rules relating to the entrance examination. Information regarding marks and standards, deferrals, eligibility to re-sit, dates of examination along with all the education rules can be found in the prospective student area of www.kingsinns.ie.

ACCEPTANCE OF OFFERS

Offers of places on the degree course must be accepted in accordance with the timeframe laid down by the Education Committee. Candidates to whom places are allocated will be notified as soon as is practicable. Such candidates will be required to submit an acceptance form and the appropriate fee within a specified period

BARRISTER-AT-LAW DEGREE COURSE

The Barrister-at-Law degree is the vocational stage of training for the Bar of Ireland. It can be undertaken either as a full-time one-year course or as a modular two-year course. Entry to the degree course is by entrance examination (see page 5).

The aim of the course is to enable students to acquire and develop the skills, knowledge and values needed to become an effective member of the Bar. It is practical and interactive and is intended to bridge the gap between the academic study of law and practice at the Bar. The syllabus covers the following subjects and activities:

1. Remedies and Quantum
2. Practice and Procedure:
 - Civil Practice and Procedure
 - Criminal Practice and Procedure
 - Evidence
3. Legal Skills:
 - Advocacy
 - Negotiation
 - Consultation
 - Opinion Writing
 - Drafting
 - Legal Research
4. Ethics, Professional Responsibility and Practice Management
5. Participation in Mock Trials
6. Attendance at courts, tribunals and other specialist bodies
7. Advanced study of specialised areas of practice (students have a choice of areas from which they must choose two)

Throughout the course, teaching and learning focus on what happens in practice. The programme is demanding with extensive preparation required in advance of each class. Classes are taught almost exclusively in groups of sixteen with the emphasis on student exercises and group work based on realistic case papers. During the mock trials all students take part (as barristers) in a civil and criminal trial. These trials are heard in the Four Courts with members of the judiciary or senior counsel acting as judges. Students are given numerous opportunities to practise and receive feedback in the workshops and are expected to participate in all classes. Attendance is compulsory and is monitored strictly, as it is considered part of the students' professional responsibility to their future clients. In order to successfully complete the course a student must have attended at least 90% of all classes.

During the course students are required to keep commons by dining in the hall on a number of occasions.

FULL-TIME ONE-YEAR COURSE

This takes place over one academic year beginning in October and runs over three terms ending in late May or early June. Classes take place between 9.00 am and 5.15pm every day from Monday to Friday during term time. Examinations take place in terms two and three.

MODULAR TWO-YEAR COURSE

This takes place over two academic years each of which begins in September and runs over three terms ending in late May or early June. Classes take place between 9.00 am and 5.15pm every third weekend (Saturday and Sunday) during term-time. Additionally attendance will be required on up to 10 weekdays each academic year for activities such as court visits and assessments. For the time being the availability of the modular degree course will be monitored closely but it is hoped to continue to offer it every year.





FURTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

CONFERRING OF DEGREE

Upon successful completion of the degree course, a student may be admitted to the degree of Barrister-at-Law. This ceremony usually takes place in mid July in King's Inns and in mid October in the Four Courts.

CALL TO THE BAR

To be eligible to be called to the Bar, a person must have

- been conferred with the degree of Barrister-at-Law,
- submitted a satisfactory declaration to the benchers.
(form at www.kingsinns.ie/website/prospective_students/prospective.htm)

The call to the Bar by the Chief Justice usually takes place in mid July and in mid October in the Supreme Court

NOTE: The Irish language requirement which arose under the Legal Practitioners (Qualification) Act 1929 has now been replaced with that under the Legal Practitioners (Irish Language) Act 2008. Under this provision all students on the Barrister-at-law degree course must undertake a compulsory course in Irish legal terminology and the understanding of legal texts. There is no accompanying examination or assessment to this course but attendance is compulsory.

SPECIALLY QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

Qualified lawyers from other jurisdictions and students who have undertaken legal education in other jurisdictions should direct queries on the application process to info@kingsinns.ie

TUITION FEES

Information regarding fees for King's Inns courses and examinations can be found in the prospective student area of www.kingsinns.ie. The degree course is an approved course under the Higher Education Grants Scheme; intending applicants should contact their respective county council in order to establish their status vis-à-vis this form of funding. In cases of exceptional hardship, the Education Committee may remit fees payable to the Society; applications for remission of fees must be submitted before 1 September in any year (see the prospective student area of www.kingsinns.ie) for application forms.

FACILITIES

The facilities at King's Inns are top class with pleasant lecture theatres, computer facilities with connections to relevant databases and web, and small classrooms equipped with plasma TV screens and cameras. Wireless facilities are provided for students' laptops. The library is open from 8.30 am to 8.30 pm on most days. A canteen serves hot drinks and food from early morning to late in the evening.

LINKS

If you go to www.kingsinns.ie and press "links", you will be able to access most of the Irish websites which have a legal relevance. Also available are websites for Irish universities, legal publishers and legal education links.

If you go to the prospective student area of www.kingsinns.ie, you will be able to find

- (a) Background information and an application form for Diploma in Legal Studies
- (b) Background information and an application form for Entrance Examination
- (c) Education Rules



INFORMAL ACTIVITIES AT KING'S INNS

The Law Students' Debating Society of Ireland (LSDSI) at King's Inns is one of the oldest legal debating societies in these islands. The students organise a number of in-house debates and moots throughout the academic year. National and international competitions are also encouraged and supported.

The Brian Walsh Memorial Moot is the leading in-house moot and with a considerable number of the student body getting involved. A maiden's moot is also organised internally. A moot (Bréagchúirt Uí Dhálaigh) is held in the Irish language. In recent times, Kings' Inns students have represented Ireland in the Philip C. Jessup *International Law Moot Court Competition* (Washington DC) which is considered to be the most challenging of all moots.

Down through the years, teams from King's Inns have won or have been placed in well-established debating competitions such as the *Irish Times Debating Competition*, *The World Universities Debating Championship*, *the European Universities Debating Championship*, *the John Smith Memorial International Mace* and so on.

Other competitions involving the skills of the profession are the *Vienna International Commercial Arbitration Moot* and *the International Negotiation Competition*. Teams from King's Inns have acquitted themselves very well in these competitions over the last number of years.

King's Inns students edit the well-established *Irish Student Law Review*. This review has been particularly well received by the law libraries in North American universities.

Distinguished guests usually address the students when they pay courtesy calls to King's Inns.

On the non-academic side, the LSDSI organises a number of social and sporting events. The latest addition to this stable is the Hurling Club. Students at King's Inns and barristers in their first year of pupillage are permitted to play for the club; matches are played in Belfast, Cork, Dublin and elsewhere.

The auditor of the LSDSI is elected at the beginning of Michaelmas term each year. All King's Inns students are eligible to go forward for election to this prestigious position.



THE WIDER APPLICATIONS OF THE SKILLS ACQUIRED

The degree course is designed to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge for practice at the Bar. However, the skills acquired on the course are relevant to numerous other careers:

1 ADVOCACY

The skill of advocacy is readily transferable and applicable to employment outside the Bar and is invaluable for anyone whose work requires communication and presentation skills (whether it is making a speech at a conference, putting forward proposals to prospective clients or presenting an argument at a meeting).

Techniques taught on the advocacy course include

- Constructing a logical argument,
- Pitching an argument at an appropriate level,
- Knowing how to combine written argument with oral persuasion,
- Using voice and manner to their best advantage,
- Dealing with interruptions and questions.

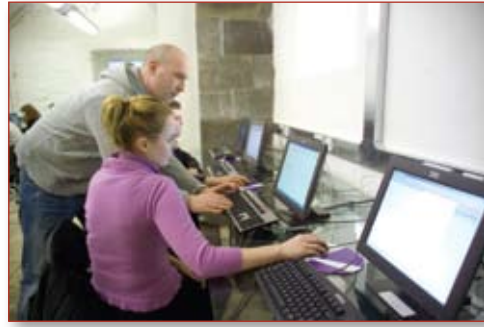
2 CONSULTATION

A consultation is the term used by the Bar for a meeting with the client, the purpose of which is to find out the necessary information, to advise clients on their legal situation and on the decisions they will have to make and then to give the clients that advice. During the consultation the skills part of the training comes into play by providing techniques for dealing with diverse people in a range of situations and:

- Extracting information quickly and logically,
- Understanding the merits of different questioning techniques,
- Challenging people without losing their trust,
- Explaining complicated concepts clearly, simply and accurately.

3 NEGOTIATION

During this course, students learn the techniques of effective negotiation. They learn to build strategies and to use methods that will further the client's best interest while taking account of factors such as financial constraints, procedural rules, the future working relationship between the parties and professional ethics. A negotiation is dynamic and interactive and involves the skills of questioning and listening and of persuading by argument, all of which are applicable to other areas of employment.



4 OPINION WRITING

Students are trained to present pertinent and succinct analysis of a case, to extract and distil the core issues, to research as necessary and to advise on the best course of action and the most likely outcomes. Both opinion writing (written analysis and advice) and consultation (oral analysis and advice) enable students to extract what is relevant from a mass of unstructured information, to assess the situation, to take responsibility for advising on the best course of action and to explain that advice clearly, logically and professionally.

5 DRAFTING

The skills acquired during the drafting part of the course enable students to draft documents that are clear, precise, accurate and succinct.

6 CASE PREPARATION

Case preparation and analysis is a skill that has many applications. It involves the analysis of fact, conclusions, assumptions, inferences or argument. The quality, reliability and the source of information must be identified, separated and deployed to achieve the objective of the exercise. Students learn to cope with volumes of information and to

- extract and distil the core issues,
- formulate objectives,
- build strategy and argument.

