



Higher Rights of Audience Information Guide

Thank you for choosing BARBRI Altior for your Higher Rights of Audience (HRA) training and/or assessment. This information guide is intended to answer most, if not all, of your questions between now and completing your course/assessment.

Please read the information below carefully before attending the course/assessment.

Introduction to Higher Rights of Audience

HRA are extended rights of advocacy for solicitors, enabling them to conduct hearings in the higher Criminal and Civil Courts, usually the Crown Court and High Court respectively. When you obtain the qualification, you can style yourself as a Solicitor Advocate. To gain Higher Rights, you must pass a Solicitors' Regulation Authority (SRA)-validated assessment in advocacy. Although the scheme is intended for qualified solicitors, trainees can also take the assessment during their training contract (and satisfy the elective requirement of the PSC through the associated training if they wish). They have to wait until they qualify, however, before they can apply to become a Solicitor Advocate.

Training and/or Assessment

BARBRI Altior's HRA programme is made up of training courses and an assessment, comprising two parts. In order to obtain the HRA qualification you will need to sit and pass the HRA assessment, which consists of written and practical assessments. The training is designed to help to prepare you for the assessments and to develop your advocacy skills for use in Court.

Confirmation of Booking

You will receive a confirmation e-mail on booking. We advise you to keep a note of your Delegate ID, which is shown on the top right corner of the letter attached to the e-mail, as this will be requested whenever you contact us. Please be reminded that our Terms & Conditions apply to all bookings. Please see our website for full details: <http://www.altior.co.uk/terms-conditions>.

Joining Instructions and Course Materials

Your joining instructions (including venue details, timings and preparation requirements) will be made available on our learning management system, MyKaplan, three weeks before the start of each course or assessment (with the exception of the Practical Assessment which will be made available 10 days before). Here you will be able to download any documents you need prior to each date, plus additional information related to the assessment process, such as the Candidate Handbook and Assessment Regulations.

You will receive e-mail notification when each course or assessment is available to view. To view the relevant information, you will need to log onto the portal at <https://www.mykaplan.co.uk/Login>. Please contact us if you have any issues with logging into the system or accessing the materials.

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Absence & Transfer

If you know in advance that you cannot attend a date(s) of the course or an assessment, you must provide us with written notice by e-mail or letter.

No transfer fee will apply to requests received at least 60 days prior to the first day of the course. Transfer requests received within 60 days prior to the first day of the course will result in a transfer fee payable equivalent to 50% of the fee paid/due for the booking. Transfer requests received within 28 days prior to the first day of the course will forfeit 100% of the fee paid/due for the booking and any new dates will attract an additional full fee as published at the time. Please note that once a transfer fee has been incurred, it will only be waived in the case of proven illness (evidenced by a valid medical certificate sent to us within 7 days of your absence) or other exceptional circumstances.

Preparatory Work

There is no preparation work required for the written and practical training courses, although you will be provided with soft copies of the course materials to review prior to the course should you wish to do so. Please see section 12 for details of the materials relating to the written and practical assessments.

Special Requirements

If you have any special needs (including dyslexia), impairment or disability and require any assistance or a particular piece of equipment to be made available, please let us know immediately so that we can endeavour to accommodate your needs. Please note that we may not be able to meet your requirement if we are not given reasonable notice.

Arrival

Please arrive at the venue at least 30 minutes before the start of each tuition day. The Solicitors' Regulation Authority (SRA) requires that a minimum of 6 hours face-to-face tuition must be completed each day and therefore arriving more than 30 minutes after the start time may result in the trainer refusing to admit you. Similarly, all delegates must stay until the end of each day.

For assessment days we advise that you arrive at least 45 minutes before the assessment start time. For the practical assessment you will be allocated a specific assessment time slot, which will be detailed in the schedule available on MyKaplan. Upon arrival for the training days, your room will be sign posted on the venue's notice board. On the practical assessment day, please wait in the designated waiting room/area signposted at the venue until the assessor collects you. Prior to sitting an assessment, you will be required to produce photographic identification in the form of a current passport, driving licence or other recognised form of photographic ID.

Please inform our Administration Team immediately if you are running late as you will not be allowed to attend the assessment if you arrive after your allocated time/start of the assessment.

Signing the Register

It is crucial that you sign the register for each course/assessment date you attend in order to satisfy the fire regulations at a venue and as subsequent proof that you have attended that day.

Please note that the SRA specifies that you must attend each tuition day and assessment in its entirety and our accreditation stipulates that we can only issue a certificate of completion to those delegates who have attended the required number of hours.

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Dress Code

There is no specified dress code for the training days or written assessment. For the practical assessment you should dress as if you were going to Court, although gowns are not required.

What to Bring

Training Course materials will be provided at the venue. You therefore only need to bring writing equipment with you. You may also find post it notes and highlighter pens useful. On the written assessment day you may wish to bring any permitted materials as detailed in the Candidate Handbook.

On the practical assessment day, you will need to bring hard copies of any documents you wish to use during the assessment. You must also provide the assessor with a hard copy of both your Skeleton Argument for your Legal Submission and your Trial Strategy Plan, as well as any case law you wish to rely on.

Assessment Procedure

The HRA assessment is a single assessment which comprises two elements; a written examination and a practical advocacy assessment.

Written Assessment

This part consists of a 2½ hour unseen examination with an additional 30 minutes of reading time. The paper contains a section of short answer questions based on a case study and a section of multiple choice questions. You are able to take permitted materials into the examination (please see the Handbook for further details).

Practical Assessment

This element is split into two parts and lasts for approximately 50 minutes. The first part requires you to submit a Skeleton Argument and conduct a contested interim hearing. The second part revolves around a mini mock trial and requires you to submit a Trial Strategy Plan and be assessed in one of the following areas:

- Opening Speech
- Examination-in-Chief
- Cross-Examination or Closing Speech

You will not be told until the day of the assessment which area you will be assessed in, so you need to fully prepare to be assessed in all of these areas. You will have access to the case papers on MyKaplan 10 days before the assessment date. This allows you a minimum of 5 working days to prepare your Skeleton Argument (for the interim/preliminary hearing) and Trial Strategy Plan (for the mini mock-trial). You will be required to submit your documents online by 10.00 am on the last working day prior to the assessment. No extensions to this time frame are permitted. Full details of the assessment format are in the Handbook.

Appeals Procedure

Details of the appeals procedure can be found in the Handbook.

Mitigating Circumstances

Candidates who attend and complete an assessment will be presumed to be “fit to take the assessment” and evidence produced after the event in respect of circumstances existing before the assessment will not be accepted nor considered by the Exam Board. You will be required to sign a ‘fit to sit form’ prior to each assessment

It is a candidate’s responsibility to notify us in advance of the assessment of any illness or personal circumstances (e.g. a close family bereavement) which may prevent them from performing to the best of their ability on the day. If appropriate, we can then make arrangements to defer the candidate to a later date.

BARBRI Altior reserves the right to charge the candidate a fee for the deferred sitting in the absence of corroborating evidence. Full details of our “fit to take the assessment” and mitigating circumstances procedures can be found in the Candidate Handbook.

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Pass Marks and Results

The written and practical parts of the assessment each account for 50% of the total marks available. You must achieve a minimum of 60% across both parts (an aggregate mark) to pass the Assessment. You will also be required to satisfy the Equality, Diversity and Ethics Standards throughout the assessment.

The two elements of the assessment (written and practical) comprise one assessment and you will only be notified of your final aggregate result expressed as pass or fail. As such results for the written and practical assessments will not be issued separately and you will not be provided with a percentage mark. During the training course you may be given feedback on your practice performances, but formative feedback will not be provided for the practical assessment.

Results for the assessment will be released within 12 weeks of the final element being taken and will be sent via e-mail to the e-mail address provided on the booking form. It is therefore imperative for you to ensure that your preferred e-mail address held on our files is kept up to date. For data protection reasons results cannot be given out over the telephone.

Please note that examination results will not be disclosed until our fees have been paid in full.

Re-Sits

If you fail the HRA assessment and wish to re-sit, you will have to book and pay for both elements (written and practical) at the same time. There is no limit to the number of times you can re-sit the HRA assessments. It is a matter for you to decide if you wish to re-attend the training course, at your expense, prior to any re-sits.

Completion - Certificate

We will issue you with a certificate, once you have satisfactorily passed the assessment and any outstanding fees have been paid in full.

Certificates will be sent to the nominated postal address held on our database. It is therefore imperative that you inform us of any changes to this address. Please safeguard your certificate as you will need to submit it to the SRA as proof that you have passed the assessment. We charge a fee of £25.00 plus VAT for re-issuing a certificate.

Complaints Policy

We are committed to providing a high level service to our clients and, therefore, if you are not happy with something we want to know about it. This will help us improve our standards and prevent the problem recurring. In most instances, an issue can be easily resolved by discussing it with the person involved, or raising the matter with the trainer, Programme Leader or another member of BARBRI Altior staff.

However, if you would like to make a formal complaint, please refer to our complaints procedure can be found in the Candidate Handbook.

Key Contacts

Contact our Delegate Services or Administration teams on [029 2045 1000](tel:02920451000) or by e-mail at infoaltior@barbri.com.