



The Bar Council

Writing, editing and teaching law

Purpose:	To explain the rules regarding the use of the title 'barrister' when writing, editing or teaching law
Scope of application:	All barristers
Issued by:	The Ethics Committee
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Status and effect:	Please see the notice at end of this document. This is not "guidance" for the purposes of the BSB Handbook I6.4.

1. Any member of the Bar, whether or not they hold a practising certificate, may write or edit articles or reports, as well as teach or lecture in law. These activities are specifically excluded from the definition of "legal services" in the BSB Handbook, Part 6:

"Legal services... does not include:

...

b) lecturing in or teaching law or writing or editing law books articles or reports;"

2. The effect of this exclusion is that any member of the Bar can undertake these activities and describe themselves as a barrister when doing so. No instruction from a professional client is necessary.

3. The following is also excluded from the definition of legal services: "examining newspapers, periodicals, books, scripts and other publications for libel, breach of copyright, contempt of court and the like". See the BSB Handbook, Part 6: Definitions for further exemptions.

4. Bar Mutual covers barristers for “any and every description of Civil Liability whatsoever arising out of or in any way in connection with the Insured Practice”, which is principally defined as supply of Legal Services as a Self-Employed Barrister. Bar Mutual’s definition of Legal Services is similar to, but not the same as, the definition in the BSB Handbook and the terms of cover explicitly exclude “lecturing in or teaching law or writing or editing law books articles or reports” as well as “examining free of charge newspapers, periodicals, books, scripts and other publications for libel, breach of copyright, contempt of court and the like” [Bar Mutual Terms of Cover 2025 Clause 3.1(vii)]. It may be that the publisher will assume legal liability but that is not necessarily the case. Most top-up providers do cover liability for such publications and, if desired, care should therefore be taken to ensure that appropriate insurance is in place for any such activities.

Important Notice

This document has been prepared by the Bar Council to assist barristers on matters of professional conduct and ethics. **It is not “guidance” for the purposes of the BSB Handbook I6.4, and neither the BSB nor a disciplinary tribunal nor the Legal Ombudsman is bound by any views or advice expressed in it.** It does not comprise – and cannot be relied on as giving – legal advice. It has been prepared in good faith, but neither the Bar Council nor any of the individuals responsible for or involved in its preparation accept any responsibility or liability for anything done in reliance on it. For fuller information as to the status and effect of this document, please see [here](#).