BAR READERS' COURSE 2027 – INFORMATION SHEET

The Bar Readers' Course is organised and delivered by the South Australian Bar Association (SABA).

The purpose of the Course is to provide prospective new members of the Bar with information and practical experience necessary for efficient and effective practice as a new barrister.

Course contents and timing

The Course is delivered annually commencing in July.

The Course is comprised of:

- a seminar series (occurring over two weeks full time in August). Details of the contents of that series can be found in the Course Syllabus.
- a range of practical in court exercises being an appeal, criminal law, family law, civil interlocutory applications (occurring both as part of the seminar series in August and two weeks full time in November/December).
- a mentoring period with required tasks being undertaken with chosen mentors (which typically commences after the practical exercises are undertaken in November/December).

Further, a pre-requisite for completing the Bar Readers Course is successful completion by the Reader of the Essential Trial Advocacy Course (ETAC) delivered by the Australian Bar Association (ABA). That Course is undertaken shortly before the Bar Readers Course commences. Information on ETAC can be found at the ABA website - Courses. The ETAC course location alternates between Perth and Adelaide. Once you have been accepted as a Bar Reader you will be allocated a place on the next available Course.

A calendar for the Bar Readers' Course with specific dates to be reserved will be available prior to the due date for applications.

Applications

Applications to undertake the Bar Readers' Course and to join SABA are to be received between **15 December and 15 February**. The Application for Membership form is available here. All applications will be received and treated on a strictly confidential basis as between the applicant and SABA.

To become a member of SABA, the applicant must satisfy the criteria for membership. In particular:

- You must be admitted as a practitioner of the Supreme Court of South Australia.
- You must hold a current unrestricted practising certificate issued under the *Legal Practitioners Act 1981*.
- You must undertake:
  - to practice exclusively as counsel;[1]
  - to be bound by the Barristers' Conduct Rules;
  - to comply with the SABA Constitution; and
  - to abide by any ruling or resolution of SABA by the Bar Council or its authorised delegate.

Applicants will be notified in March as to whether their application has been successful.

Acceptance of an applicant to undertake the Bar Readers' Course, or for an exemption from doing so is at the absolute discretion of the Membership Committee, subject to review by the Bar Council.

[1] See s 6 *Legal Practitioners Act 1981 (SA)*.

Upon acceptance to the Bar Readers' Course, the Reader will be invited to sign the roll named in honour of Lindy Powell KC, an inaugural member of the Membership Committee and a former Chair of the Course over many years. This is an interim statement of your status as a Reader and entitles you to hold yourself out as a Reader at SABA. Upon satisfactory completion of all units of the Course, you will be invited to sign the Bar Roll.

Exemptions

Each Reader is expected to undertake all parts of the Bar Readers' Course, including by attending and participating in all of the Seminar Series, Advocacy Units and the Reading period.

Any application for exemption from either the entirety or parts of the Course in accordance with the Bar Readers Course Exemption Policy must be made in writing by completing the relevant part of the Application for Membership.

Any applications for exemption from individual sessions or exercises on compassionate grounds must be made in writing to the Course Coordinator in advance of the relevant session or exercise and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Reader may be required to provide or undertake other work in lieu of their attendance.

Requirements for successful completion

Completion of the Course requires satisfactory participation in each of the seminars and practical exercises by the Reader. Satisfactory participation requires active participation in the Course, including considered preparation for practical exercises.

Attendance throughout the Course is compulsory. A failure to attend any more than 5% of the seminar series and a failure to attend the exercises without an exemption will require the Course to be completed in the subsequent year.

At the end of the reading period, the Mentors and Readers must submit a report that certifies that the Reader has achieved a satisfactory result for all units and, in particular, the elements identified in the Report. A copy of the Final Report to be completed by mentors is available here.

Chosen mentors must be full members of the Association (of not less than 5 years). In order to provide a level of satisfaction necessary to certify the Report, a Mentor will need to have undertaken some supervision of aspects of the Reader's practice, including the drafting of pleadings, affidavits and opinions as well as the Reader's work as a junior. It is necessary for the Mentor to have knowledge of the matters that the Reader is involved in and, conversely, it is necessary for the Reader to have some involvement in the Mentor's matters.

Upon receiving and forming a view there has been satisfactory completion of all requirements by the Reader, the Membership Committee will make a recommendation to the Bar Council that the Reader is to be admitted as an Ordinary Member of SABA. Once the Bar Council passes a resolution accepting the recommendation, Graduate Readers will be advised in writing, and they will be invited to re-sign Powell's List and the Bar Roll.

Thereafter a Reader can hold themselves out as a member of the Association and fully participate in its activities.

Cost

The cost of the Bar Readers Course is $4,400 (inclusive of GST). That fee does not include the fee for ETAC and any associated costs for travel that is required to complete that course.

Applicants who withdraw from the Course less than 28 days prior to its commencement will only be entitled to a refund of 90% of the fee. After commencement of the Course, the fee is non-refundable.

September 2026