

**MENTORING FOR UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS:  
A SCHEME RUN BY COMMERCIAL BARRISTERS' CHAMBERS  
GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

**Aim of Mentoring Scheme**

1. The aim of the Mentoring Scheme is to encourage people from groups of people who are under-represented at the English bar and in particular the commercial bar to pursue careers as barristers.

**Who we are and what we do**

2. The sets of Chambers participating in the Mentoring Scheme in the academic year 2021-2022 are as follows (in alphabetical order):
  - 2.1. Blackstone Chambers
  - 2.2. Brick Court Chambers
  - 2.3. Essex Court Chambers
  - 2.4. Fountain Court Chambers
  - 2.5. Gatehouse Chambers
  - 2.6. Keating Chambers
  - 2.7. One Essex Court Chambers
  - 2.8. 7 King's Bench Walk
  - 2.9. Monckton Chambers
  - 2.10. 3 Verulam Buildings
3. Barristers at these sets of Chambers work on a wide range of different types of cases. The emphasis varies from set to set, and from barrister to barrister, but the areas of law include the following:
  - 3.1. commercial law (which includes, for instance, contractual disputes, insurance law, banking and financial services law, shipping, construction and civil fraud). This accounts for the majority of work done in most of the participating sets of Chambers;
  - 3.2. European Union law;

- 3.3. competition law (which includes, for instance, the law on cartels);
  - 3.4. public law; and
  - 3.5. white collar crime.
4. Although the mentors' experience is as set out above, and they will be unable to offer detailed advice in relation to areas of practice outside those areas, the mentoring scheme is open to those interested in a career at the Bar generally, or non-commercial parts of the Bar, and not only those interested in a career at the commercial Bar.

### **Eligibility**

5. Eligibility criterion 1: Prospective mentees may apply for the Scheme at any time from their first year of undergraduate study (whether in law or any other discipline). Applicants may be of any age and any background, but they should not have already been awarded a pupillage, or have commenced pupillage. Experience suggests that applicants are likely to get the most out of the scheme if they apply earlier in their university career but the scheme can be worthwhile at other times.
6. Eligibility criterion 2: Prospective mentees may be from any group(s) which is/are under-represented at the English Bar or the commercial bar. For instance, such groups may (non-exhaustively) include:
  - 6.1. women;
  - 6.2. people from minority ethnic backgrounds;
  - 6.3. people with disabilities;
  - 6.4. LGBT+ people;
  - 6.5. people who spent time in care;
  - 6.6. people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (as indicated, e.g., if an applicant was eligible for free school meals, or comes from a family on income support);
  - 6.7. people who attended state schools, in particular non-selective state schools, for the majority of their secondary education (i.e. between the ages of 11 and 18 years); and
  - 6.8. people who were in the first generation in their family to attend university.
7. Applicants must meet eligibility criteria 1 and 2.

## **Assessment criteria**

8. Applications from individuals who meet the eligibility criteria identified above (and our experience is that many of our candidates, although by no means all, fall into more than one of the groups listed in paragraph 6 above) will be assessed according to the applicant's need (i.e. how much they are likely to benefit from the mentoring) and the applicant's potential to pursue a career at the Bar.
9. Potential to pursue a career at the Bar may be demonstrated in the following ways:
  - 9.1. Evidence of intellectual ability. This may, for instance, be demonstrated through educational achievement, in particular in the context of average attainment at the educational settings attended by the applicant.
  - 9.2. Evidence of a desire to pursue a career at the Bar, or a legal career in any area of the law. This may, for instance, be demonstrated through relevant work experience (although it is recognised that not all applicants will have had the same work experience opportunities), summer work or extra-curricular activities, or other evidence of commitment to a particular activity or skill.
  - 9.3. Evidence of an ability to write well and persuasively, and/or to show compelling reasoning, in particular in the answers to the two long-form questions on the application form.
10. When assessing potential to pursue a career at the Bar, we will seek to consider the applicant's achievements in the context of their particular circumstances and any difficulties which they may have encountered.

## **Mini-pupillage and pupillage applications**

11. The Scheme is separate from the mini-pupillage and pupillage application processes of the participating Chambers. It follows that an applicant for mini-pupillage and/or pupillage at any participating set of Chambers will not be at any disadvantage because they have not participated in the Mentoring Scheme, and participation in the scheme will not give particular insight or advice into an individual Chambers' application processes.

## **Process**

12. Applications should be made by midday on 6 September 2021, by e-mail to [mentoring@brickcourt.co.uk](mailto:mentoring@brickcourt.co.uk). Successful applicants will be informed by e-mail by 4 October 2021.

13. We expect to be able to offer approximately 100 places on the Mentoring Scheme.

**What the Scheme will involve**

14. Successful applicants will be allocated an individual mentor, who will be a member of one of the participating sets of Chambers.

15. The Scheme will run between October 2021 and May 2022. During that period, mentees will be offered the following:

15.1. between three and five one-on-one meetings with your mentor;

15.2. a workshop on applications for pupillage; and

15.3. subject to developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, a social event for mentors, mentees and members of the participating sets of Chambers.

16. The above sessions will take place in person, to the extent possible; otherwise, they will be held via video-conference. Where sessions are held in person, the set of Chambers of which your mentor is a member will reimburse reasonable travel expenses.

17. After the end of the mentoring period, mentors are not obliged to (but may agree to) continue to provide assistance to mentees.

**GDPR**

18. Data provided by applicants and mentees will be processed and held in accordance with applicable data protection regulations, including the requirements of UK GDPR. For information on how your personal data is processed, please see our privacy notice, which can be accessed on the GDPR page of the Brick Court Chambers website.