

**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 underrepresented at the English bar or 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 2020-2021 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. One Essex Court Chambers
 - 2.6. Three 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). 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. The Mentoring Scheme has the support of Combar.¹

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.

6. Eligibility criterion 2: Prospective mentees may be from any group(s) which is/are underrepresented 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 will be assessed to identify the applicant's potential to pursue a career at the Bar. Such potential may be demonstrated in the following ways:

8.1. Evidence of intellectual excellence. This may, for instance, be demonstrated through educational achievement (e.g. excellent grades at GCSE/A' Level and/or in university

¹ "Combar" is the Commercial Bar Association, the specialist association for commercial barristers at the English Bar.

examinations), in particular in the context of average attainment at the educational settings attended by the applicant.

8.2. 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, summer work or extra-curricular activities, or other evidence of commitment to a particular activity or skill.

8.3. 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.

9. When assessing applications by reference to the above criteria, 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

10. 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.

Process

11. Applications should be made by midday on 2 October 2020, by e-mail to mentoring@brickcourt.co.uk. Successful applicants will be informed by e-mail by 13 November 2020.

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

What the Scheme will involve

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

14. The Scheme will run between November 2020 and June 2021. During that period, mentees will be offered the following:

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

14.2. a workshop on applications for pupillage; and

- 14.3. subject to developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, a social event for mentors, mentees and members of the participating sets of Chambers.
15. 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.

GDPR

16. Data provided by applicants and mentees will be processed and held in accordance with applicable data protection regulations, including the requirements of GDPR.