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Pupillage Policy

ROPEWALK
— CHAMBERS —

Barristers regulated by the Bar Standards Board

1) Introduction

We are looking to recruit pupils that will carry forward our core values of excellence, service and integrity. In return, we will make a significant investment, both financially and in training and guidance.

We hope to provide pupillages that are engaging, constructive, informative and fair. Our aim is to give our pupils the grounding and skills needed to pursue a successful career at an award-winning chambers, where a first class practice can be built, whilst enjoying the quality of life in a vibrant and diverse region, where hard work is materially rewarded.

All pupillages are conducted in accordance with the Bar Standards Board's [Bar Qualification Manual](#).

2) Number and type of pupillages

2.1) Number of pupillages

We offer up to three full pupillages per year of 12 months duration each, on the basis of a realistic expectation of a tenancy being offered upon successful completion.

2.2) “Third Six” pupillages

We accept applications for Probationary Tenancies (formerly “Third Six” pupillages). Assuming previous pupillage experience is in our primary practice areas, the pupillage would be for a period of six months. Probationary Tenancies are unfunded but a contribution to reasonable travel expenses incurred during the pupillage period would be made. Further details are available at our website, www.ropewalk.co.uk

3) How to apply

Applications for pupillage should be made through the [Pupillage Gateway](#). Applications for Probationary Tenancy is by Letter and CV to the Head of Chambers.

4) Funding

4.1) Award

All full pupillages offered are funded. The funding operates for twelve months, providing the pupillage continues throughout that period. Should pupillage end early for any reason, funding will cease at the end of the month when pupillage ceases. In the case of misconduct on the part of the pupil, we may seek repayment from the pupil of the funding provided.

We presently offer an award of £50,000 per pupil. This is made up of £25,000 for the non-practising period and guaranteed receipts of £25,000 in the practising period.

This guarantee operates on a month by month basis, so that in any single month where gross receipts are less than £3,333.33 we make up the balance. There is no “clawback” in respect of payment made in any month if receipts in any other month of the practising period exceed £4,166.66.

An advance of the award may be considered at the beginning of the non-practising period in cases of exceptional need.

4.2) Drawdown

A drawdown of up to £10,000 is available during the twelve months before commencement of the pupillage. Such drawdown is at the absolute discretion of Chambers and will be the subject of a separate written agreement.

4.3) Training courses

In addition, we will pay the costs of attending compulsory courses as required by the Bar Standards Board, which include the Advocacy Training, Practice Management and Forensic Accounting Courses (if undertaken during pupillage).

4.4) Expenses

Pupils are expected to cover their own expenses in travelling to and from Chambers, when meeting their supervisor within a 25 mile radius of Chambers and when engaged upon their own work. Pupils are otherwise not expected to meet travel and accommodation expenses when accompanying a pupil supervisor.

4.5) Clerks' fees

Clerks' fees are payable on income received in respect of work done during pupillage.

5) Fair recruitment and selection

5.1) Diversity and inclusion

We are committed to the principles of equality and inclusion and to ensuring an absence of direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, citizenship, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, disability, age, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, caring responsibilities, religion or belief.

5.2) Advertising pupillages

All vacancies for full pupillage shall be advertised on the Pupillage Gateway and Probationary Tenancies are advertised on the Bar Council's website.

5.3) Selection process

The selection process involves:

- Selection of applicants for interview based upon the application form.
- A first interview, usually conducted by two members of Chambers, during part of which the applicant will be asked to discuss a legal problem provided upon arrival for interview.
- A second interview usually conducted by five members of Chambers. No less than three working days before this interview, applicants will be provided with a legal problem which they must be prepared to discuss in detail (the preparation of written material, other than the applicant's notes for their own use, for this interview is not required and will not be considered by the interview panel.)

The selection of applicants for first interview will be carried out by two or more members of Chambers and no application will be rejected solely upon the basis of the view of one person. Selection for interview will be strictly by reference to published selection criteria (please see Appendix A). The criteria may change slightly from year to year but the same criteria will be applied to all applicants in any one year. The selection criteria will be set in accordance with our core values of excellence, service and integrity.

Applicants not selected for first interview will be informed as soon as practicable. Any applicant invited for first interview will be informed of the date of the interview and will be reminded of the remainder of the pupillage recruitment timetable.

Interviews shall be planned in advance and structured so that each candidate can demonstrate their abilities and qualities by reference to each selection criterion. A significant part of both the first and second interviews will involve discussion of the legal problem posed on arrival for interview (first interview) or provided in advance (second interview). By this means, we seek to arrive at a reliable objective assessment of the merits of all applicants. At interview, applicants will be invited to ask any questions they may have relating to pupillage and practice here.

Panel members will score interviewed candidates individually on an agreed scale and will then compare scores with others on the panel so as to seek to reach a consensus. No decision about selection for second interview will take place until all first interviews have been completed. Applicants will be informed at the end of first interview of the proposed timetable for notification of the panel's decision.

Those applicants not selected for second interview will be informed as soon as practicable.

No decision about final selection will be made until all of the second interviews have been completed. Applicants will be informed of the decision on their application as soon as practicable thereafter.

5.4) Interview panels

The interview panel members will include as diverse a group of members of Chambers as it is practicable to arrange. All those on the interview panels will have received recent and relevant fair selection and recruitment training.

5.5) Offer of pupillage

A formal offer of pupillage will be made to the successful applicant(s) in writing and shall contain the following:

- Date of commencement of pupillage
- Details of the supervision arrangements, together with the details of the Principal Pupil Supervisor.
- Details of the award offered.
- Details of how long the offer remains open.
- A draft of the written pupillage agreement that the pupil and Chambers will be required to enter into.

5.6) Feedback

Given the numbers of applicants for pupillage, it is not possible to offer feedback to individual applicants whose applications fail at the initial selection stage.

Any applicant who has not been successful after selection for interview can request reasons for this decision. Such feedback will normally be by way of informal discussion or brief email and we reserve the right to terminate this element of the process at any time.

5.7) Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the procedure set out above, upon request, should it be necessary.

5.8) Expenses

In cases of exceptional need, reimbursement of travel expenses to interview would be considered.

5.9) Improvement

At the end of each phase of recruitment, the selection process will be reviewed and monitored to identify any potential areas of improvement.

5.10) Retention of records

All records relating to the process will be retained for six months after the final interview.

5.11) Grievances

Any formal grievance arising from the application process should be raised in writing with the Head of Chambers as soon as practicable and in any event no later than 28 days after the date when the situation giving rise to the grievance occurred.

5.12) Check of Qualifications

On or before the pupillage commencement date, the Head of Pupillage will undertake a formal check of the selected Pupils' Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC) result to ensure that the selected pupil has in fact successfully completed the BPTC. If a selected Pupil makes a declaration on the application form as to a BPTC result that he or she holds knowing that such a declaration is false or not believing such a declaration to be true, then the Head of Pupillage will report such matter to the Bar Standards Board pursuant to Rule rC66 of the Code of Conduct.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy may be found at www.ropewalk.co.uk.

6) Structure and duration of pupillage

A full pupillage is divided into two parts, a non-practising period of six months (the First Six) and a practising period of six months (the Second Six).

6.1) The non-practising period

During the non-practising period, pupils may not accept instructions, except for noting briefs but will be expected to attend court and conferences with their supervisor and to do paperwork for them and other members of Chambers. Subject to obtaining permission from the Principal Pupil Supervisor, pupils may provide unpaid legal advice at organisations such as Law Centres, the Free Representation Unit and Citizens Advice.

6.2) The practising period

During the practising period, pupils are expected to undertake a range of court work in our core areas. We usually limit the number of days per week during which a pupil may appear in court in order to provide continuing training and facilitate a properly balanced pupillage. When not engaged on their own work, pupils will still be expected to attend court and conferences with their supervisor and to do such paperwork as offered. "Devilling" fees shall not be paid to pupils.

6.3) Principal Pupil Supervisor

Pupils will be allocated a trained and Bar Standards Board registered Principal Pupil Supervisor, who will remain the person having ultimate responsibility for the pupil for the duration of pupillage.

We make every effort to place each individual pupil with a supervisor best able to provide training suited to the individual needs of that pupil. We also take into account any expression of interest by a pupil in particular practice areas when allocating a supervisor.

6.4) Pre-pupillage visit

For early familiarisation and to obtain the maximum benefit from the pupillage, a pupil will be invited to spend two periods of one week in Chambers with their Principal Pupil Supervisor in the twelve months prior to start of pupillage.

6.5) Rotation

To enhance the training offered, maximise the breadth of the experience of differing types and methods of work by our barristers and to ensure that the pupil's work is seen and reported upon by a variety of members of Chambers, pupils will follow a rotation during their pupillage, generally as set out below:

- Pupils spend the first three months of pupillage with their Principal Pupil Supervisor.

- Pupils are then placed with other members of Chambers generally for periods of six weeks at a time. There will be occasional shorter periods of secondment to other pupil supervisors. Each person to whom the pupil is seconded under this scheme will complete a written report on the pupil's progress and performance as against Chambers' tenancy criteria (set out at Appendix B).
- During the last month or so of the non-practising period, so far as feasible, pupils will accompany the more junior members of Chambers to court so that they can gain experience of the type of work they are likely to undertake in the practising period of the pupillage.
- In the first month of the practising period, the pupil returns to the Principal Pupil Supervisor for close guidance during this important period.
- Thereafter, the pupil returns to the rotation of being placed with other members of Chambers for periods of six weeks, with occasional shorter periods of secondment.
- For the final month of pupillage, the pupil returns to the Principal Pupil Supervisor.
- All Supervisors on rotation will be a registered Bar Standards Board Pupil Supervisor.
- All Pupil Supervisors will have received Equality and Diversity Training in accordance with the requirements of the Bar Standards Board.

6.6) Working hours, holidays and sick leave

Pupil supervisors will tell pupils when they expect them to attend Chambers, although that will normally be between the hours of 8.30am and 6pm each weekday. Pupils should also expect and be prepared to work in the evenings and at weekends. Pupils will attend court and conferences with their supervisors at locations throughout England and Wales, whatever hours that might entail. Normally, pupils can expect to travel with their pupil supervisors for these purposes.

Pupils are entitled to 20 working days leave, not including Bank Holidays, per annum. Pupils should take no more than two weeks leave in each part of pupillage and dates are to be agreed with the Principal Pupil Supervisor.

In the event that a pupil is not able to attend Chambers due to illness, in the first instance, the clerks will need to be informed by telephone. If sickness absence continues for more than a week then consideration will be given to extending the pupillage period. If a decision is taken to extend the pupillage period, then the pupillage award will continue for the extended period. As an alternative to extension of the pupillage period, consideration will be given to remote working where this is appropriate.

We recognise that there may, exceptionally, be a need for additional time off for example to attend medical appointments or where there is a bereavement. In those circumstances, the pupil supervisor, in his or her discretion, may allow the pupil to take additional time off.

7) Fair distribution of work

Work for pupils is carefully monitored and every endeavour is made to ensure a fair and equal distribution of opportunities and income.

The Equality and Diversity Committee regularly review the distribution data for pupils and any improvement initiatives would be actioned if necessary.

8) Ongoing assessment

8.1) General performance

The general performance of pupils is monitored primarily by the Principal Pupil Supervisor and regular, informal discussions will be held with pupils in relation to progress. Pupils are to maintain a work diary with comments to be added by the supervisor which serves as evidence of monitoring of all work done in pupillage.

8.2) Quarterly review

At the three, six and nine month stages and during the twelfth month of pupillage a formal quarterly pupillage review will be conducted.

This is a meeting in the form of an appraisal attended by the pupil, the Principal Pupil Supervisor and a member of the Pupillage Committee. At this review, consideration will be given to the extent to which the pupil has demonstrated the required standards and competencies.

A written report upon the pupil's performance with reference to the published tenancy criteria during the quarter is prepared for this meeting by the Principal Pupil Supervisor. This report shall reflect the content of any reports upon the pupil prepared in that quarter by other pupil supervisors to whom the pupil has been seconded. These reports are presented to the pupil for consideration in advance of the review meeting. The meeting is an open discussion and gives an opportunity to offer further guidance. The meeting also gives the pupil an opportunity to raise any concerns or queries relating to pupillage with the Principal Pupil Supervisor or a member of the Pupillage Committee.

8.3) Client feedback

During the practising period, the clerks will also monitor any feedback upon performance from clients and will report this to the Pupillage Committee.

9) Application for and notification of tenancy

9.1) Admission of a new tenant

By Chambers' Constitution, the admission of a new tenant to Chambers can only be granted upon Special Resolution, approved by three-quarters of the members of Chambers voting in person or by proxy or by Electronic Resolution. In making any such decision, Chambers shall take into account any recommendation from the Management Committee.

9.2) Application for tenancy

Pupils wishing to apply for a tenancy should apply in writing to the Head of Chambers not more than six or less than four weeks before the end of their pupillage.

Any such application will be considered initially by Chambers' Management Committee.

9.3) Management Committee recommendation

In considering the application the Management Committee will:

- Review the pupil's progress during pupillage and, in particular, will review such performance as against the tenancy criteria.
- Seek to ensure that such consideration is objective, fair and, so far as possible, evidence- based.
- The Management Committee will have available for its consideration copies of all written material collated by the Pupillage Committee in respect of the pupil's performance during pupillage to include:
 - Reports produced for quarterly reviews by the Principal Pupil Supervisor.
 - Written reports by other members of Chambers to whom the pupil has been seconded under the rotation on scheme set out above.
 - Written reports by other members of Chambers for whom the Pupil has done work.
 - Written comments by the clerks as to the pupil's performance in the practising period.

Not less than ten working days before the end of the pupillage, the Management Committee, having considered all such material, will make a recommendation to Chambers as to whether the pupil should or should not be granted a tenancy.

9.4) Chambers' decision

Chambers will decide upon the application not less than five working days before the end of the pupillage and the pupil will be notified of the decision by the Head of Chambers or his or her nominee immediately thereafter.

9.5) Unsuccessful applications

In the case of any pupil who makes an unsuccessful tenancy application, Chambers may, in its absolute discretion, permit that pupil to remain in Chambers for a specified period to enable the pupil to make alternative arrangements.

10) Pupils' responsibilities

10.1) Registration

It is the pupil's responsibility to:

- Ensure they are called to the Bar.
- Register the pupillage with the Bar Standards Board before the pupillage commences.
- Upon successful completion of the non-practising period, ensure the Principal Pupil Supervisor signs the form declaring satisfactory completion of the non-practising period and submit it to the Bar Standards Board.
- Upon successful completion of the practising period, ensure the Principal Pupil Supervisor signs the form declaring satisfactory completion of the non-practising period and submit it to the Bar Standards Board, together with the requisite completed checklists.
- In the event that the Principal Pupil Supervisor refuses to declare that the pupil has satisfactorily completed either period of pupillage, the pupil shall have a right to appeal that decision to the Head of Chambers. Such appeal must be in writing, must set out in full each and every reason why the refusal to make the requisite declaration was wrong and must be received by the Head of Chambers within 3 days of the decision of the Principal Pupil Supervisor not to make the requisite declaration. The decision of the Head of Chambers to either uphold the decision not to make the declaration or to reverse it, will be final.
- Ensure they have completed the required courses.
- Register with the Information Commissioner.
- Register as self-employed with HMRC.

10.2) Checklists and work diary

Pupils will be expected to follow and complete the work set out in the General Common Law, Personal Injury and General Commercial checklists and to keep a work diary. We expect a pupil to observe and check that the requirements of the checklists are being fulfilled so that the pupil supervisor is in a position to sign off the checklist upon completion of pupillage.

10.3) General requirements

Pupils should familiarise themselves with the work of their supervisor, should be ready to attend conferences and court, taking full notes, and to produce written work.

Members of Chambers engage in a number of internal and external seminars throughout the year which are accredited for the purposes of continuing education and pupils are expected to attend.

Pupils are expected to achieve and maintain the standards of work and conduct to be expected of a member of the Bar and of these Chambers and to comply with.

- The Bar Standards Board's [Bar Qualification Manual](#).
- The Core Duties and Conduct Rules, as set out in the Bar Standards Board's [Handbook](#).
- All Chambers' policies and procedures that they are issued with.

Pupils are expected to act with honesty and integrity at all times. In the event that it comes to the attention of a Member of Chambers or staff that the Pupil has acted in a manner which does not uphold Chambers' values of honesty and integrity or which might amount to serious misconduct within the meaning of the Code of Conduct, the matter will be reported to the Head of Chambers who will, if necessary, report the matter to the Bar Standards Board pursuant to rule rC66 of the Code of Conduct.

11) Roles and duties of pupil supervisors

On the pupil's arrival in Chambers, the Principal Pupil Supervisor will take responsibility for familiarising the pupil with all aspects of Chambers including members of Chambers, clerks and administrative staff. In addition, the Head of the Pupillage Committee will carry out an induction as recommended by the Bar Standards Board.

Pupil supervisors are expected to provide the pupil with a thorough grounding in the conduct and etiquette required at the Bar as well as ensuring that the appropriate checklists are completed.

Pupil supervisors will promptly complete the relevant registration forms once prepared by the pupil.

Pupil Supervisors will be ready to discuss every aspect of the court work and conferences in which they are engaged with the pupil and will consider carefully every piece of written work which the pupil produces.

They will also provide general advice and guidance to the pupil and will be available to discuss the work that the pupil undertakes in their own right during the practising period.

Pupil supervisors will take a full role in the ongoing assessment process. Please see Chambers' Pupil Supervisor Policy.

12) Role of a Mentor

The Head of Pupillage will appoint a Mentor for Pupils. This will be a practising barrister who is entirely independent of the Pupillage Committee. Pupils can discuss any matter with their Mentor, and it shall remain entirely confidential. This provides an additional layer of support for the Pupils and ensures their general health and well-being during their Pupillage.

13) Complaints and grievances

A pupil who considers that they may have a grievance or complaint of any kind should first discuss the matter informally with their Principal Pupil Supervisor. If the grievance or complaint directly involves the Principal Pupil Supervisor then the pupil should raise the matter with a member of the Pupillage Committee in confidence. The Principal Pupil Supervisor or the member of the pupillage committee will decide how to deal with the grievance including involving the Head of Chambers with the pupil's permission.

Any complaints in respect of equality or harassment would be dealt with in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy, issued to all pupils and also available at www.ropewalk.co.uk.

Appendix A – Selection criteria

	Competency	Evidence source
	Knowledge / intellectual ability	
1	Intellectual ability	Application form Interview
2	Relevant experience	Application form
3	Appreciation of equality and diversity issues	Interview
	Skills	
4	Advocacy skills Written Oral	Application form Interview
5	Confidence and social maturity	Interview
6	Clarity of thought and expression	Interview
7	Team – working	Interview
8	Customer focus and empathy	Interview
	Attitude	
9	Drive and motivation	Application form
10	Resilience, ability to perform under pressure	Interview
11	Integrity, moral courage	Interview
12	Commitment to the profession	Interview

Appendix B – Tenancy criteria

To be selected for a tenancy at Ropewalk Chambers an applicant must have demonstrated all of the following characteristics and competencies to a high degree:

1. Ambition and commitment to the profession and a career at the Bar.
2. Commitment to the maintenance of the highest professional standards.
3. Confidence and strength of character including the ability to develop and maintain a good rapport with professional and lay clients and the ability to stand up to the Court where necessary.
4. Sound and comprehensive legal knowledge particularly in areas(s) of intended practice.
5. Analytical ability, both factual and legal.
6. Skill in oral advocacy, commensurate with experience.
7. Skill in written advocacy commensurate with experience including the ability to produce accurate, clear and well-structured advices, pleadings, skeleton arguments and other documents.
8. Appreciation of and ability to cope with the demands of successful practice at Chambers, including organisation of work, time management and the ability to meet deadlines.
9. Good judgment, common sense and tactical sense.
10. Such other additional abilities, skills and attributes, not specifically referred to at above, but which they were required to demonstrate in order to secure pupillage.

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