

PUPILLAGE POLICY AT MIDDLE TEMPLE LANE CHAMBERS

Middle Temple Lane Chambers ("MTL Chambers) came into existence recently and our aim is to provide bespoke and quality service to both our professional and lay client. We are uncompromising in our mission to provide excellent service for our clients; hence, we desire to recruit individuals who share our aspiration first as pupils and subsequently after successful completion of training as tenants.

Pupils will be able to experience excellent in-house advocacy training combined with working with members on very interesting cases predominantly in criminal and some civil specialism. We pride our selves as a very close knit and friendly set that will provide an atmosphere where a talented pupil will flourish. In addition, we take particular care to ensure that our pupils are fully equipped to cope with the rigour of practice at the Bar by maintaining regular personal contact with them throughout the duration of pupillage.

Structure of Pupillage

Now we offer one 12 months criminal pupillage. As chambers grow, we may consider offering two pupillages per year. Most of the work that a pupil will be expected to be involved in would be in the London area. On occasions, a pupil may be expected to attend court with their Supervisor out of London and we always provide reasonable transport fare for such trips. In any event, a second six pupil will expect to travel outside London for PCMH, pre-trial review and minor applications. Again, chambers always bear the travel cost.

At the moment chambers only offers third six months pupillage to pupils in chambers who have completed their 12 months within chambers. We will review this position in future.

Pupils may have one pupil supervisor per six months or twelve months. However, pupils will be expected to work with other members of chambers in order that they undertake paperwork and they are exposed to other areas of work during pupillage.

During second six months, pupils can expect to be in court on a daily basis. The work will include mainly Magistrates Court appearances and summary trials, as well as appearances in the Crown Court on simple applications and eventually full trials when the pupil is considered ready for such work. The supervisor will work closely with the pupil to ensure that the pupil checklists are fully completed and ensure that the training received reaches the required level.

The Role of the Pupil

Pupillage at MTL is to be treated as a full time job. A pupil, for the duration of training, will be expected to attend court or chambers at 9am prompt, or any other time arranged by their supervisor, and is present in chambers until 6 pm after leaving court on a typical working day.

The pupil will be expected to be appropriately dressed at all times either in court or chambers in dark clothing appropriate for attending court even if they are not attending court on that particular day. At MTL, a pupil will share a room with their supervisor

The pupil will be required to assist in the preparation and legal research in cases being conducted by their supervisor. They are also required to undertake written work for their supervisor and other members of chambers who would also have an opportunity to assess the pupil's ability.

The pupil will be expected to attend conferences with their supervisor and other members of chambers. However, it is our policy that pupils should not contribute their opinion or speak at a conference unless they are specifically invited to do so by their supervisor or the barrister conducting the conference.

Duties of Pupil Supervisor

It is the primary responsibility of the Pupil Supervisor to ensure that the pupil is properly introduced to all members of chambers and staff at the start of the pupillage. The supervisor will also ensure that the pupil is familiar with chambers administration, the relationship between the pupil and members of staff and how the pupil should relate to chambers solicitors.

Fundamentally, it is the duty of the Supervisor that the pupil is well trained and equipped to practice at the Bar by ensuring that they are available to discuss regularly with the pupil ethical issues providing them with adequate exposure to the type of work that the pupil will undertake in their second six and beyond.

We appreciate that pupillage is a particularly difficult and stressful time for a pupil. However, it is the responsibility of the Supervisor to ensure that they are able to offer counselling and necessary support to the pupil if the pupil is faced with any difficulties in chambers.

In-house Training at MTL

Our Head of chambers is IATC qualified and is an experienced BVC lecturer in advocacy, conference and Negotiation skills and he takes a keen interest in the development and assessment of the pupil's skills.

We undertake in house advocacy training with pupils. The pupil is expected to make oral applications such as bail applications, plea in mitigation etc in front of a panel in chambers once a month. The pupil is then given guidance on how to improve their skills and they are assessed again to establish that they understood the guidance given. Further exercises in Examination-in-chief, Cross-examination and ethics are undertaken during the 12 months pupillage. IATC method is adopted in all our in-house training programmes.

It is chambers policy to pay for pupils to attend the Forensic Accountancy, Advice to Counsel and Human Rights Act courses.

Funding

We provide £5000 Award in the first six months and £5000 guaranteed earnings in the second six months. In most cases the second six months earnings exceeds the minimum guaranteed figure.

Pupils travel cost to Court and Chambers will be covered by chambers in addition to the pupillage Award.

Second six pupils pay 10% clerk fees. The 10% clerk fees will only apply after the pupil has earned the minimum £5000 in their second six.

Application Process

Vacancies for pupillage will be advertised on www.pupillage.com between April and August for pupillages to commence in October of the same year.

Recruitment of pupils is undertaken by our pupillage committee. We expect that applicants have the minimum of a second-class honours degree. We also expect that the potential candidate has shown some affinity to and have some experience in public funded work. The first stage of recruitment is that we will consider written applications and CVs from which we will select candidates for a two-stage interview process.

First round interviews are brief; the questions intended to allow applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their eloquence and legal knowledge. Those who reach the second round will find themselves performing an advocacy exercise in addition to further questions.

Equal Opportunity Policy

Chambers adheres strictly to its equal opportunity policy and this is enshrined in Chambers Constitution. We strongly believe that no Member of Chambers, Door Tenant, pupil, member of staff or employee should be treated less favourably than any other person on grounds of race, ethnic origin, gender, religion, age, political persuasion, sexual orientation or disability. We reflect this policy in our recruitment procedure and distribution of work within chambers.

Work Distribution in pupillage

In accordance with our Constitution we adhere strictly to a policy of fair distribution of work in chambers and amongst pupils

The Pupil Supervisor will review on a two monthly basis the distribution of work to ensure the pupil is given a fair and equal access to work, chambers solicitors and any other opportunity that are available to pupils during pupillage. Prompt remedial action will be taken where required by chambers.

Tenancy

Our aim is to where possible recruit our tenants from our own pupils. We, therefore, invest considerable time and energy into their development and training during pupillage.

Grievance and Complainant

Pupils will have access to a copy of Chambers Constitution that sets out in detail in its Articles 131 to 137 our grievance procedure. All grievance or complaints must be submitted in writing.

Library Resources

Chambers has a Library comprising of a collection of up to date relevant professional textbooks and publications, as well as online electronic material to which the pupil will have access. In addition, we are within close proximity of the Inner Temple and Middle Temple Libraries where the pupil will be expected to attend on occasions to carry out extensive research.