

MENTORING FOR UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

Aim of the Mentoring Scheme

1. Barristers are specialist legal advisers and advocates. The sets of barristers Chambers taking part in the Mentoring Scheme wish to encourage people from groups who are underrepresented at the planning, public law and property Bar in England to pursue careers as barristers. The Mentoring Scheme aims to provide advice and guidance to undergraduates and post-graduates who might be suitable candidates for a place at the Bar on the process of becoming a barrister.

Who we are and what we do

2. The sets of Chambers participating in the Mentoring Scheme in the academic year 2026-2027 are as follows (in alphabetical order):
 - 2.1. 39 Essex Chambers
 - 2.2. Cornerstone Barristers
 - 2.3. Falcon Chambers
 - 2.4. Field Court Chambers
 - 2.5. FTB Chambers
 - 2.6. Gatehouse Chambers
 - 2.7. Kings Chambers
 - 2.8. Landmark Chambers
 - 2.9. No5 Chambers
 - 2.10. Tanfield Chambers
3. Barristers at these sets of Chambers work on a wide range of cases. The emphasis varies from set to set, and from barrister to barrister, but the areas of law include the following:
 - 3.1. town and country planning;
 - 3.2. environmental law;
 - 3.3. property law;
 - 3.4. housing law; and
 - 3.5. public/administrative law.

Eligibility

4. The Mentoring Scheme is open to anyone who might be suitable for a career at the Bar and is from a group of people who are underrepresented at the Bar in the areas of law undertaken by the above sets of Chambers. To be eligible to apply for a place on the Mentoring Scheme a candidate must satisfy two criteria.
5. Eligibility criterion 1: Prospective mentees may apply for a place on 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 must be from one or more groups which is/are underrepresented at the English Bar in the areas of law undertaken by the above sets of Chambers. 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/universal credit);
 - 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 see if they have shown the 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 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 sets of Chambers. It follows that an applicant for mini-pupillage and/or pupillage at any of these sets will not be at any disadvantage because they have not participated in the Mentoring Scheme.

Process

11. Applications should be made by the end of 9 October 2026, by e-mail to mentoring@cornerstonebarristers.com. Successful applicants will be informed by e-mail by 31 October 2026.

12. We expect to be able to offer approximately 70 places on the Mentoring Scheme.

What the Scheme will involve

13. Successful applicants will be allocated an individual mentor from one of the participating sets of Chambers.

14. The Scheme will run between November 2026 and June 2027. During that period, mentees will be offered the following:

14.1. a workshop introducing the scheme and the work of a barrister

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

- 14.3. a workshop on applications for pupillage;
 - 14.4. at least one 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 (i.e. on Zoom or Microsoft Teams). Where sessions are held in person, the scheme will reimburse reasonable travel expenses, which should be applied for by emailing: mentoring@cornerstonebarristers.com

GDPR

16. Data provided by applicants and mentees will be processed and held in accordance with applicable data protection law, including the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation. By submitting an application, an applicant is consenting to the processing and holding of their data for the purposes of the Mentoring Scheme.