

WHITESTONE CHAMBERS

Barristers

Whitestone
Chambers

Whitestone Chambers

1 Essex Street

London

WC2R 3HU

PUPILLAGE POLICY

(September 2021)

In recruiting pupils, we search for candidates who show the potential required to become successful barristers and who will fit well with our working environment at Whitestone. Therefore, we select pupils according to certain criteria which are applied at each stage of the selection process. This criterion is set out below.

Whitestone operates an equal opportunities policy in the selection process in line with the equality rules in the Bar Standards Board handbook. No assumptions will be made about a candidate's abilities or potential based on race, ethnic or national origins, nationality, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion, political persuasion or disability.

1. Paper application:

All pupillages are advertised via www.pupillagegateway.com together with full details of how to apply.

Chambers will draw up a short list of applicants from the applications received by the closing date. All applications will usually be considered by at least 2 members of Chambers. In the event that there is significant disagreement between the assessments made, additional members of Chambers will make their own assessment of the application.

In assessing the written applications Chambers looks for:

- Satisfactory overall presentation of the application:
 - o Quality of CV and covering letter;
 - o Accuracy of spelling and grammar;
 - o Whether the specific position applied for is clearly stated.

- Evidence of intellectual ability:
 - o Applicants for first six will be expected to have performed to a high academic level;
 - o Whether this is supported by research, publications and relevant work experience, such as any paralegal work or volunteering, for example at CAB;
 - o Ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively (written at this stage and orally at interview stage).

- Motivation:

- Applicants are expected to show a commitment to develop their acquired legal skills for successful practice at the Bar;
- Achievements i.e. academic/ professional/sporting;
- Other work and commitments;
- Efforts to gain experience – mooting/debating, mini pupillage, marshalling, work placements;
- Evidence of commitment to hard work and an organised approach to work.

Aside from the above criteria, there are no specific qualifications or qualities that Chambers requires. Similarly, Chambers does not have a set number of applicants who will be interviewed. All candidates who are considered to have demonstrated sufficiently the attributes set out above will be short listed for interview.

2. First and second interview:

Short-listed applicants are called for a first interview in Chambers. Following the first round of interviews a short list is made of those who will be called for a second interview.

The purpose of the interview is to find out as much as possible about the candidate so their qualities may be assessed. Interviews are structured in order to ensure comparability between interviewees. This is done by posing similar questions regarding Whitestone’s selection criteria. A standard set of questions and scoring guidelines are agreed by Chambers beforehand. All candidates are marked on the same basis. Questions will avoid personal relationships and family composition which are irrelevant to suitability.

Each candidate will be given a score from 1-5 for each area of selection criteria. Listed in order of priority, these are:

- Intellectual abilities
 - Performed to a high academic level;
 - Ability to express ideas clearly and persuasively.
- Relationships
 - Ability to develop professional relationships and to work well with others;
 - Strong interpersonal skills.
- Temperament
 - Ability to engage with others;
 - Appropriate demeanour and ability to adapt in different situations.
- Motivation
 - Commitment to develop their acquired legal skills for successful practice at the Bar;

- Evidence of commitment to hard work and an organised approach to work.
- Self-presentation/impact
 - Good first impression;
 - Positive and confident attitude.

The first interview is more general, the questions are designed to ascertain the applicant's genuine interest in Whitestone and commitment to the Bar.

Scoring is carried out separately by the member of the interview panel. All scores will be recorded immediately after the interview. At the conclusion of the interview stage, the interviewer will consider the performance of each candidate and decide on whom to invite to a second interview.

At each stage unsuccessful candidates are notified promptly.

Second interview (if applicable)

This interview will last for 15 minutes and is more challenging than the first.

Interviews will be conducted by at least 2 members of Chambers reflecting where possible the full diversity of Chambers as well as different levels of seniority. Except where prevented by immediate circumstance, all candidates will be interviewed by the same members of Chambers.

The candidate will be asked hypothetical questions. The purpose of this is to test the candidate's ability to think on their feet when under pressure, to articulate an argument effectively, their presentational and persuasive skills and their judgment.

Questions will be asked which may cover a wide variety of topics depending on the individual. Such questions are designed to assess the applicant's personal qualities, such as, personality, manner, client skills, general knowledge, organisational skills, regulation and knowledge of current affairs.

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- Motivation
 - Commitment to develop their acquired legal skills for successful practice at the Bar;
 - Evidence of commitment to hard work and an organised approach to work.
- Self-presentation/impact
 - Good first impression;
 - Positive and confident attitude.

Specialist knowledge is not required. The candidate is only expected to have a general interest in and understanding of legal matters. Candidates are also encouraged to ask questions at the end of the interview.

Scoring is carried out separately by each member of the interview panel. All scores will be recorded immediately after the interview. At the conclusion of the interview stage the interviewers will meet to discuss the performance of each candidate and reach agreement on whom to offer pupillage to.

At each stage unsuccessful candidates are notified promptly.

3. Candidates who are offered pupillage

All pupillage offers are for 12 months. If a pupil accepts an offer of pupillage, they will be sent a written agreement setting out the terms as required by Chambers as an AETO.

All pupils will be provided copies all of Chambers policies prior to commencement of their pupillage. The same policies are available on Chambers website. Incoming pupils will also be sent a “pupil induction Manual” which will give them Further details of the operation of Chambers and helpful notes on things such as Chambers IT infrastructure.

4. Pupillage assessments

Pupils will be taught in line with Chambers training syllabus. Assessments will be undertaken at 3,6,9 and 12 month periods in line with Chambers appraisal form. These assessments will be held in person unless there is a good reason that they can't be.

5. Pupil's Complaints

Any member of Chambers, pupils of Chambers, Chamber's staff and applicants for positions in Chambers should refer to the relevant Chambers Grievance Policy. Whitestone Chambers have policies covering Grievances, Acceptable Behaviour and Equality and Diversity amongst others. If any pupil is unsure which policy they should refer to, they can ask the Complaints and Grievance Officer, Mina Heung, or the Head of Legal Operations. A list of all Officers is available from the Head of Legal Operations.

6. 3rd Six - Paper application:

Applicants for 3rd six pupillages must demonstrate a solid grounding in basic practice and procedure in either criminal or civil law. Prior to selection applicants will be expected to produce examples of written work and references regarding both academic and professional work.

Chambers will initially follow the procedure set out at 1 above.

Following that stage Chambers will draw up a short list of applicants who, on assessment of their application, are suitable for interview.

7. Tenancy

Selection is made according to how the applicant fits with the working needs of Chambers at the time the application is made.

Decision to offer tenancy to a pupil:

- Pupillage is an opportunity to put developing skills into practice and, hopefully, to secure a tenancy. However, we do not treat pupillage as a year long interview for tenancy. Instead, the emphasis is on the pupil's development as a barrister as well as their prospects as a tenant.
- The decision is made during the pupil's second six and applications are invited after 4 months.
- The decision is made either by a recruitment committee comprising 3 members of Chambers or by all the tenants of Whitestone Chambers in general meeting. The Head of Legal Operations will be invited to obtain feedback and will supply this to tenants either in a written report or orally in general meeting.
- The merits of the candidate are assessed on the basis of their performance throughout pupillage and against the selection criteria outlined above.
- The decision to offer tenancy to a pupil is also made according to the Bar Equality Code.

- Junior tenants are generally recruited from our own pupils. However, we reserve the right not to offer tenancy to any pupil.
- The pupil is required to make a formal application. This consists of the following:
 - o Cover letter (no more than one page);
 - o Single lever arch file with index to include a cross section of drafting undertaken by the applicant, a copy of their work diary (taken from IRIS) for the last 6 months;
 - o Only one copy of the application is required, and it is filed in the clerks' room. Tenants are written to asking them to review the application in the following two weeks and supply and written comments to the Head of Legal Operations.

Applications to join Whitestone Chambers as a tenant:

- Whitestone may at times wish to recruit an experienced barrister. Positions will be advertised, and applications are welcome in the form of CV and covering letter.
- In line with planned expansion, applications are invited from common law, commercial and personal injury practitioners.
- In the event of multiple applications, chambers will decide which applications are sufficiently strong to take to the next stage, bearing in mind the business objectives of Whitestone and the applicant's level of skill and experience. On this basis a short list of applicants for interview will be drawn up.
- Tenants will meet the applicants to discuss their professional history, experience, standing at the bar and their reasons for wanting to join Whitestone Chambers.
- Applicants are likely to be invited to meet with tenants on an informal basis at chambers after the working day has concluded.
- Any decision to offer tenancy will be made by the tenants. Such a decision can be made without a formal general meeting.
- Tenancy's will be offered which include a probationary period.

Communication and Records

Records are kept of all applications and decisions relating to recruitment.

Chambers do not provide feedback to candidates following applications made to it. We wish we could, but we simply do not have the resources to do so given the number of candidates that apply to the set.

Professional Statement for Barristers.

The Bar Standards Board have provided a document entitled “Professional Statement for Barristers” which incorporates the threshold standard and competences for Barrister. A copy is annexed to our Pupil Policy available by selecting the download button below.

This policy will be reviewed by September 2023

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