

# **CHAMBERS OF JAMES MELLOR QC**

## **POLICIES IN RELATION TO PUPILS**

### **Number of Pupils**

Chambers generally expects to award one or two funded pupillages each year, to applicants who are perceived as being strong contenders for tenancy in due course. Such pupillages are for twelve months, with a review at six months.

### **Finance**

For funded pupillages, Chambers makes an award of £55,000 - £25,700 award and £25,700 by way of guaranteed income. Pupils may draw down a portion of this award while they are studying the Bar Professional Training Course.

Owing to the complex nature of the law practised by members of Chambers and the time it takes to learn, there is not a great deal of suitable work for pupils to undertake in their second six months, and recent experience has been that they will generate some fees, but usually not up to the level guaranteed.

### **Selection Procedures**

It is Chambers' policy to select pupils in the following way:

- (a) Application is initially through Pupillage Gateway
- (b) On the basis of their Pupillage Gateway applications, a number of applicants are asked to attend a first interview. The first interview is with three or four members of Chambers and the Senior Clerk and is intended to assess applicants' motivation and suitability for practice at the intellectual property bar;
- (c) On the basis of their first interviews, a number of applicants are asked back for a second interview, which is also with three or four members of Chambers and the Senior Clerk. The panel for second interviews sometimes includes some of those involved in first interviews and some different members. The second interview is intended to assess applicants' aptitude for legal reasoning and argument and takes the form of question on a legal problem. It is not intended to assess knowledge of the law of intellectual property, which is not expected of candidates. No preparation is required, but applicants will have an opportunity to consider the problem for a short time before the interview begins.
- (d) To ensure that applicants are treated uniformly throughout the selection process, Chambers tries to make sure that all applicants are asked similar questions at both interviews, that the questions asked are appropriate and fair, and that the same panels of members of Chambers attend all of the interviews in each round (professional commitments permitting).

Those who are invited for interview will be offered reasonable travel expenses for travelling to and from the interview

### **Role and Duties of Pupils**

Pupils spend almost all of their time, particularly in the first six months, observing their pupil supervisors (and other members of Chambers) and assisting them by drafting pleadings and opinions, undertaking legal research, summarising or analysing documents, working with their pupil supervisors in preparation for trial and hearings, and so on.

In their second six months of pupillage, some pupils will also undertake a certain amount of their own work, usually devilling, simple opinions or pleadings, or straightforward Court hearings. For the reasons mentioned above, it is unlikely that pupils will do much work on their own account, although such work usually increases significantly in the last couple of months of pupillage for pupils who have been taken on.

Pupils will have the responsibility for producing new case summaries for the Chambers website.

Pupils may be asked to give a lunchtime CPD Seminar to chambers in March. (the 1<sup>st</sup> ¼ of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year). Pupils may be asked to conduct an advocacy exercise in the form of a simple application which they will be asked to prepare and argue in front of at least one senior barrister (e.g. the head of Chambers or other senior QC) as well as their pupil supervisor.

It is Chambers' objective that by the end of pupillage each pupil should have developed the competencies in the BSB's Professional Statement."

### **Working Hours**

Chambers' core business hours are 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday (inclusive).

There are no fixed training hours, and a pupil's working hours will depend on the demands of practice, but to get the most out of your pupillage you are expected to be available for education and training for a minimum of 45 hours each week.

Pupils will be asked to sign a waiver from the Working Time Regulations.

### **General Pattern of Pupillage**

Pupils usually spend two-three months with each pupil supervisor. Chambers is however flexible in this respect, and pupils may spend slightly more or less time with a particular pupil supervisor, for example, in order to see a case to its conclusion, and may spend time with other members of Chambers if deemed particularly interesting or useful to do so. Pupil supervisors will be chosen based on their availability and the type of work that they anticipate doing during the relevant period. The pupillage committee will endeavour to ensure that the pupil is exposed to as broad a range of types of work as possible during their pupillage.

Each pupil supervisor will give the pupil feedback in the following forms:

- a) feedback on each piece of work that the pupil completes.
- b) formal feedback at the end of their time with the pupil. This should be conducted with the pupil, the head of the pupillage committee and the next pupil supervisor. This feedback should cover (i) the pupil's strengths and (ii) areas that require improvement in relation to the following:
  - 1) Written work (pleadings, skeletons, legal research notes, opinions etc) both in terms of content and writing style.
  - 2) Oral contributions (input into discussions on case theory, evidence, XX prep etc).
  - 3) Other general matters (e.g. conduct in meetings, in Court and in Chambers and AOB).

The pupil will be informed that they will be receiving the above types of feedback when they arrive in Chambers, and if the pupil has not received such feedback they should inform a member of the pupillage committee.

### **Check List**

All pupils are given a copy of an 8 New Square check-list of those aspects of practice of which they should gain experience during pupillage. They should use this check-list to assist their pupil supervisors to monitor/assess pupils against the Professional Statement for Barristers.

### **Policy and Procedure for the Recruitment of Tenants**

Chambers' policy is to recruit as tenants those who Chambers consider have the ability and aptitude to become successful practitioners in the areas of law in which Chambers primarily specialises. The decision to offer tenancy to pupils is made by Chambers as a whole and depends upon the assessment by Chambers of the performance of pupils during their pupillage.

### **Policies and Procedures for Pupils not Taken On**

Chambers makes every effort to assist such pupils, by suggesting other chambers, firms of solicitors, patent attorneys, or companies, to which they might apply. Chambers further assists by contacting such persons on the pupil's behalf and by giving advice and support generally. Chambers has in recent years been very successful in ensuring that such pupils are able to find a tenancy or further pupillage in other chambers, or offers of employment.

In addition to this, Chambers makes decisions about whether or not pupils will be taken on well in advance of the end of their pupillages; decisions about tenancy are nearly always made in July. Pupils who are not going to be taken on are told so as soon as possible.

Chambers considers that it is in the best interest of pupils who are not taken on to make other arrangements as soon as possible, while at the same time recognising that this can take some time in the present extremely competitive atmosphere. Such pupils are always allowed a reasonable time to remain in Chambers while they look around, and are treated in a friendly and supportive manner while they do so.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Chambers has an internal grievance policy which the pupil will be provided with on starting their pupillage. There is specific guidance in that document regarding complaints or grievances by pupils.