



EQUITY *Chambers*

Chambers of Balbir Singh

First Floor, McLaren Building, 46 Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 7LR

Pupillage Policy

*Produced 1st January 2005 –
Reviewed & Amended 31st December 2012*

A General Policy

- (1) Equity Chambers operate an Equal Opportunities and Equality & Diversity Policy at all times. No applicant for pupillage will be discriminated against on the basis of his or her race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, religion or political persuasion or age.
- (2) Equity Chambers will review and select pupils from the total number of applicants whose applications are received by the closing date for applications as advertised.
- (3) In compliance with chapter 4.3 of the Equality Code for the Bar, pupils will be accepted only if they have gone through Equity Chambers normal selection procedure.

B **Selection Procedure**

- (1) Equity Chambers endeavour to offer two 12-month pupillages beginning in January each year as and when necessary. The pupillages are terminable after 6 months on either side and carry an award of the bar minimum paid monthly in arrears. Applications will probably not be considered from those who do not have or expect to obtain at least a 2.2 degree.
- (2) Chambers operates outside the OLPAS scheme. Applications not made in the manner prescribed below are unlikely to be considered.
- (3) Application must be made as follows:
 - i) Applicants should forward a handwritten letter with attached typed up-to-date Curriculum Vitae addressed to Head of Chambers.
 - ii) Deadline for pupillage applications will be advertised on the Pupillage Website www.pupillagegateway.com. Only applications received on or before the deadline as advertised will be considered.
 - iii) Applicants are welcome to telephone Equity Chambers if they have any questions about the application process.
- (4) As required by the General Council of the Bar, Equity Chambers will monitor pupillage applications, by sex and race.
- (5) Equity Chambers have a pupillage committee, whose constitution may change.
- (6) Where practicable, each application will be considered by every member of the Pupillage Committee independently and in and event, by no fewer than two members.
- (7) Not less than two members of the Pupillage Committee will select at least 10 candidates for interview from the total numbers of applications.
- (8) The Pupillage Committee will normally hold two rounds of interviews. In the first round all selected candidates will be interviewed by at least two members of the committee. The interview is of a general nature, and allows candidates to explain why they would like to undertake a pupillage in Equity Chambers. Not less than three members will interview all candidates selected for the second round.
- (9) Each interviewer independently using agreed written selection criteria would assess all applicants. The criteria used will be found in Appendix III.

- (10) Applicants who have not done a mini-pupillage in Equity Chambers may be invited to spend a day or more with us between the first and second round of interviews and before any offers are made.
- (11) The full Pupillage Committee will take final decisions on applications. Final decisions will not be taken until all interviews have been completed.
- (14) All applications and selection documents will be kept for a period of two years.

Offers

- (15) First offers of pupillage commencing in January will usually be made on or before the 14th of the preceding December. The offers will state the amount of the award offered, together with the period of which pupillage is offered and the period within which the offer must be accepted or refused.
- (16) At the same time Equity Chambers may inform one or more other interviewees that they will or may be made offers if one or more of those whom first offers have been made do not accept them within the prescribed period.
- (17) All offers of pupillage are made subject to successful completion of The Bar Vocational Course Examinations.
- (18) An offer of Pupillage may be subject to the successful completion of a probationary period (normally 1 month).

Complaints

- (1) Any applicants (whether or not invited to interview) who are dissatisfied with their treatment, may complain in writing to Mr Balbir Singh, Head of Chambers who will consider the complaint in conjunction with two other members of chambers who were not members of the pupillage committee, and will take any action deemed necessary. Whether or not they invoke this procedure, applicants may also use any other complaints process provided by the Bar Council or other relevant body.

C *The Role and duties of Pupils in Chambers*

- (1) A Pupil's primary role in Equity Chambers is to learn. All Pupils are expected to familiarize themselves with their Pupil Supervisor's practise, produce their own attempts at opinions and pleadings, research points of law and generally shadow their pupil supervisor.
- (2) A Pupil is required to maintain the confidentiality of every client's affairs.
- (3) Normal working hours are between 0900 and 1800. Pupils are not usually expected to work outside these hours although it may be necessary for them to do so from time to time. In particular cases it may be possible to adjust a Pupil's normal working hours, but our ability to make such adjustments will be restricted by court hours & work load.
- (4) Pupils will be permitted to attend compulsory training courses for which they may enrol during their pupillage, and will be reimbursed the costs of those courses after they have completed

them. With their Supervisor's consent, Pupils may also absent themselves from Equity Chambers to take part in work for the Free Representation Unit or a similar body.

- (5) Pupils are entitled to 20 days holiday as per Bar Council regulations during pupillage (in addition, of course, to all public holidays), although this should be arranged with the consent of their Supervisors.
- (6) Written work should be produced within the time specified by the relevant Barrister or within a reasonable time. If in doubt, ask.
- (7) Pupils will attend court, conference and negotiations with their Supervisor. As required transport out of the Birmingham area, will normally be provided by the Barrister with whom the pupil is working with on that day. Again ask if in doubt.
- (8) Pupils sit within their Supervisor's room; there is no "Pupils Room" in Equity Chambers.
- (9) When accompanying a Supervisor or any other member to court, a conference or negotiation a Pupil should not contribute unless expressly invited to do so by the Barrister. The Client, Solicitor etc. is not paying for the Pupil's opinion. If in doubt, say nothing, the relevant Barrister will be happy to answer all questions after the hearing/conference.

General Information

- (10) Pupils are not expected to know everything if they did they would not be Pupils. Pupils should feel free to ask their Supervisor questions at any time except during conferences, negotiations/court hearings etc.
- (11) Clothing should be dark and smart as befitting a member of the bar at all times.
- (12) All members of Equity Chambers are on first name terms and that includes Pupils. Except as stated above, Pupils are encouraged to have and air opinions and are not restricted to speaking only when spoken to!
- (13) Members of Equity Chamber's will always offer guidance and assistance on request and if not in Chambers maybe contacted via their relevant phone numbers.

D Role and Duties of Pupil Supervisors

- (1) Supervisors will ensure that their Pupil's do written work for other members of Equity Chambers. Copies of such work will be assessed for use in the selection of new junior tenants.
- (2) Supervisors report on each of their Pupils to the Head of Chambers, at the end of the Pupil's time with them. The report will contain the Supervisor's assessment of the Pupil's written work both advice and pleadings, and as assessment of their potential as an advocate.
- (2) At regular intervals the Supervisor will discuss informally with the Pupil his progress to date, and indicate any areas that may require further work.

E **Pattern of Pupillage**

- (1) In addition to working with his/her allocated Supervisor, Pupils will accompany Junior Tenants to court and conferences.
- (2) Pupils may also accompany other members of chambers to court where the case is particularly interesting or unusual, or it would otherwise be of benefit for a Pupil to attend the hearing.
- (4) Pupils will be expected to produce written work for other members of chambers in addition to their Supervisors. From time to time all Pupils will be asked to work on the same set of papers, in order to provide an objective basis for assessing their performances.
- (5) Equity Chambers will endeavour to provide advocacy training to all pupils within Equity Chambers at least once a term, and more frequently if possible.
- (6) In common with most other Criminal sets, Equity Chambers have work for second six pupils. When such work is available it will be distributed evenly amongst Equity Chambers Pupils subject to the relevant Supervisor being of the opinion that the work is within the abilities of his/her Pupil.
- (7) Any complaints may be raised in the first instance with a Supervisor. In addition or alternatively, Pupils may discuss any problems with Mr Sandhu or Mr Davenport on an informal confidential basis and any complaint that cannot be remedied may be referred to the Head of Chambers.
- (8) During pupillage the Head of Chambers will obtain reports on Pupils progress from their Supervisors and from any other member of Chambers for whom they may have worked or whom they have accompanied to Court, and from any other persons likely to have relevant information on the Pupils' performance.
- (9) On the basis of this material and using so far as it is practical the criteria listed in Appendix III, the Head of Chambers or his nominee and at least one other member of the Pupillage Committee will assess the Pupils' progress to date. They will discuss the assessment with the relevant Pupil, identifying where appropriate any areas in which improvements might be made.

G **Tenancies**

- (1) Tenancy applications are determined by the whole of Equity Chambers in general meeting. Applications by established practitioners are considered as and when the occasion demands, but applications for junior tenancies may be made at any time.
- (2) Equity Chambers endeavour to recruit one or more junior tenants each year, subject to the availability of work. Pupils are recruited with a view to tenancy, which will normally be offered following the successful completion of pupillage.
- (3) As part of the recruitment process other applicants may be asked to advise orally or writing on a set of papers of the sort they are likely to meet in their early years of practice. They may also be asked to settle appropriate pleadings or other documents. They will be given a limited period in which to return the papers to the Pupillage Committee. Applicants may also be invited to take part in mock hearings designed to test their skills of advocacy.

- (4) The Pupillage Committee will consider the applicants' performance in these exercises in conjunction with the reports of past and present Supervisors and any views expressed by other members of Equity Chambers for whom a pupil may have done work. The Committee will make recommendations to Equity Chambers in the light of this material.
- (5) Applications may be considered from pupils in other sets but Equity Chambers will normally expect to recruit new tenants among it's own pupils.
- (6) Equity Chambers does not normally permit Pupils who have not been offered a tenancy to squat in chambers after their pupillage have ended, It will, however, assist pupils in any way that it reasonably can to find another pupillage or tenancy elsewhere.

Appendix 1

Chambers' Mini-Pupillage Policy

A General Policy

- (1) Equity Chambers operate an equal opportunities policy at all times. No applicant for mini-pupillage will be discriminated against on the basis of his or her race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, religion, political persuasion or age.

B Selection Procedure

- (1) Equity Chambers endeavours to accommodate mini-pupillages. Equity Chambers may not offer mini-pupillages pending work commitments.
- (2) Applications must be made in the following manner: -
 - (i) Application may only be made in handwriting attaching an up to date typed Curriculum Vitae to the Head of Chambers.
 - (ii) Applications should be sent to Equity Chambers with "Mini-Pupillage" as the letter reference.
 - (iii) CV's should include all university degree and Bar exam results.
- (3) At the time any application is made, the applicant must have completed their first year of a law degree or equivalent.
- (4) Applications will be considered by one or more members of the Pupillage Committee (as defined in Chamber's Pupillage Policy). The selection criteria are the same as those applied in the selection of pupils, and are set out below in Appendix II.
- (5) Equity Chambers may decide to interview applicants for mini-pupillage.
- (6) All candidates who have made an application in the prescribed manner will be notified in writing whether their application has been successful. Those to whom mini-pupillages have been offered will be invited to contact Equity Chambers to schedule a mini-pupillage.

C The relationship between Mini-Pupillage and Pupillage

- (1) A mini-pupillage gives us a chance to meet the pupil and to get to know him or her as much as the time permits. It gives prospective applicants for pupillage an opportunity to see the type of work we do in Chambers and to make an informed choice whether to apply for a full pupillage.
- (2) An unsuccessful applicant for mini-pupillage should not be deterred from making an application for pupillage. We have only a limited number of pupillages available and a limited opportunity to assess applicants for mini-pupillage. Applications for a pupillage proper, however, are considered in some depth, and we hope to interview a significant proportion of those who apply. The fact that a candidate has not been offered a mini-pupillage does not in any way prejudice his or her chances of being offered a pupillage.

Appendix II

Criteria For Assessing Pupillage
& Mini-Pupillage Applications

Selection Criteria in order of importance

- A - Intellectual Ability
- B - Motivation
- C - Inter-Personal Skills
- D - Self-Presentation

Relevant evidence for each criterion

- A Intellectual Ability**
 - Academic achievement
 - Achievements in earlier careers
 - Degree Result
 - Awards of Distinction
 - Other Academic Qualifications
 - Success in other careers
- B Motivation**
 - Strong Drive & Determination
 - Commitments to some aspect of the Bar
 - Non-academic achievements
 - Positions of responsibility
 - Undertaking mini-pupillages/FRU
 - Interest in Criminal Work
- C Inter Personal Skills**
 - Ability to get on with a wide range of people
 - Ability to negotiate with/influence other people from an infinite range of social and ethnic backgrounds
 - Non-academic experience
 - Positions of responsibility
 - Mooting successfully
- D Self-Presentation**
 - Articulate
 - Content appropriate and to the point
 - Bearing and presence

Appendix III

Interview Selection Criterion

Intellectual Qualities:

- Think logically and clearly
- Construct logical and coherent arguments
- Absorb complex information quickly
- Analyse materials and identify discrepancies/inadequacies
- Keep a track of multiple arguments or lines of enquiry
- Seek out information
- Keep up to date
- Remain aware of practicalities

In addition, interviewers may take into account the candidates ability to perceive inadequacies, inconsistencies and inaccuracies, to check details, to see a situation from several angles, to develop new solutions, to query standard answers.

It is also important that the candidate does not lose track of issues when handling lengthy or confusing cases and situations. Evidence regarding these additional qualities could help particularly in comparing similar candidates.

Inter-Personal Skills:

- Get on with a wide range of people
- Exercise tact, courtesy and diplomacy
- Negotiate with (influence) others
- Distinguish between professional and social relationships
- Maintain personal distance while co-operating
- Adapt manner to audience
- Gain others' trust
- Empathise with others

In addition, interviewers can consider evidence of the candidate's ability to distinguish between professional and social relationships and to maintain personal distance within a co-operative role. An additional strength would be evidence of ability to accept continuous assessment and competition. Interviewers may also consider an ability to identify another's needs, to exercise discretion, to gain others' trust, to negotiate and to present effectively.

Temperament

- Work long hours (where necessary)
- Cope with deadlines
- Work fast with complex materials
- Keep calm under pressure especially so when dealing with a heavy workload and hostile clients.
- Show objective judgement