

Pupillage Guide
2020-21

Welcome to Blackstone Chambers' Pupillage Guide for 2022 applicants.



Introduction from the Heads of Chambers

We hope this guide will give you a clear overview of how pupillage at Blackstone Chambers works. We think it's important that applicants know what to expect both through the application process, together with an outline of the year in pupillage in these Chambers leading into first years of tenancy.

Chambers enjoys an enviable reputation for its wide range of work covering commercial, public and human rights, employment, EU and public international law. This was recognised in the recent past when Blackstone Chambers was named Chambers of the Year (The Lawyer Awards June 2017), where Lord Pannick QC was also named Barrister of the Year following his appearance on behalf of the lead claimant Gina Miller in the Article 50 "Brexit" Appeal. Litigation arising in 2019 meant that Lord Pannick QC and 10 others in these Chambers were subsequently instructed in the headline hitting judicial review of the prorogation of Parliament culminating in a further Supreme Court hearing in September 2019.

Chambers Student Guides 2019 and 2020 offer these comments:

"This commercial and public law titan is home to leading lights from across the spectrum."

"This chambers 'don't do boring' – pupils get stuck into a mix of commercial and public work with barristers at the top of their game."

Blackstone Chambers prides itself on the quality of its advocacy. The Lawyer magazine's Litigation Tracker analyses judgments across all the main courts in England and Wales. Between 2017 and 2019, it found that Blackstone Chambers was the most active set of Chambers measured by the number of reported cases and represented clients in 458 cases totalling 1587 case days, significantly more than its nearest rivals.

We are proud of Blackstone Chambers' reputation for our practice range which attracts a wide range of clients from all walks of life and we work hard to offer a friendly and open approach to client service. We currently have a major building project underway on site, which should complete in 2021. This will provide us with a much enhanced and more modern working environment to meet the needs of barristers and clients in the 21st century.

We enjoy and promote our collegiate working environment. Members of Chambers tend to work closely together, seeking regular advice from colleagues. We do not believe in rigid hierarchies, and all members participate fully in the life and work of Chambers. We are committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and draw our recruits from many different backgrounds, academic and professional. Current data also shows that almost 40% of our junior tenants are women.

We invest very strongly in our pupillage programme, and we believe our pupils complete the year with extremely robust legal and practical skills.

We invite you to consider a pupillage at Blackstone Chambers, and we look forward to welcoming you to Chambers should you choose to undertake a mini-pupillage with us.

Monica Carss-Frisk QC and Tony Peto QC
Heads of Chambers

“... Blackstone Chambers has a ‘deserved reputation as the best in the business’ with many of its members involved in high-profile and precedent-setting cases.”
Legal 500



Our practice areas (and case examples)

Blackstone Chambers receives high ratings in both of the two principal legal directories, Chambers UK and Legal 500. Currently listed in 18 practice areas in the Chambers Directory, Blackstone Chambers is a leading civil law set, regarded as one of the ‘magic circle’ sets in London. What is unusual about our Chambers, in addition however, is the broad range of high quality work which is undertaken here, and the scope it provides for practitioners to exercise a myriad of legal skills in practice.

It is not possible to list all our practice areas in great detail here but a look at the CVs of our barristers on our website www.blackstonechambers.com will give an idea of the vast number of interesting and cutting edge cases and areas of law in which barristers in these Chambers are instructed. However, an example of the breadth of our work can be seen from the following outline of each of our core practice areas.

Commercial

Commercial law involves representing clients in business and financial disputes, and giving advice on related legal issues. The clients may be individuals, small businesses, large corporations or government and regulatory bodies. Members of Chambers regularly appear in commercial cases in the full range of courts (from multi-million pound cases in the Commercial Court to small business disputes in the County Court), tribunals (for example in financial services regulation or tax fraud cases) and commercial arbitrations. Commercial disputes arise in a great variety of factual situations, and may raise novel and complex points of law.

Specific areas involved include arbitration, banking and financial services, commercial judicial review (see public law and human rights below), contract disputes, company law, fraud, financial services, insolvency, insurance and reinsurance, media and entertainment, partnership, professional negligence and the sale and carriage of goods. Commercial cases also frequently have an international dimension: they often require consideration of issues of private international law (i.e. whether the English courts have jurisdiction over the case and which country’s law is applicable), and opportunities arise for travelling and working abroad.

Examples of the type of case you might see during time in Chambers (often involving a team of barristers) include:

Arcelor Mittal v Essar Steel [2019] EWHC 724 (Comm)

A claim for enforcement of a foreign arbitral award worth in excess of US\$1bn involving applications for search, freezing and information orders in England and various foreign jurisdictions in dispute between two multi-national companies.

Privatbank v Kolomoisky and ors [2019] EWCA Civ 1708

The case concerns an alleged scheme perpetrated by the defendants to misappropriate and estimated US\$2 billion from the Bank. It sought, and was granted, a Worldwide Freezing Order in the amount of US\$2.6 billion.

Our practice areas (and case examples)

Rowe & Others v Ingenious (Ingenious Group Litigation)

Acting for various parties in multi-million pound civil claims brought by investors against the promoters of the Ingenious film and game schemes; and in related claims against several banks and other intermediaries who recommended the schemes. The Ingenious litigation is one of the largest, most complex claims currently in the Chancery Division.

Dana Gas PSJC v Dana Gas Sukuk Ltd

This case concerned an urgent interim anti-suit interim injunction from the Commercial Court on behalf of BlackRock to protect the English Court's jurisdiction over this substantial Financial List dispute concerning the validity and effect of a US\$850 million Islamic finance transaction.

PJSC Tatneft v Bogolyubov [2019] EWHC 1400 (Comm) [2018] EWHC 2499 (Comm), [2017] EWCA Civ 1581

Two members of Chambers are acting for the Fourth Defendant in a US\$330 million claim brought under Russian law by a Russian state owned oil company against four Ukrainian businessmen, arising out of a refusal by a Ukrainian oil refinery to pay the claimant for oil delivered in 2007.

*"An exceptional administrative and public law set, home to barristers who consistently appear in the most important challenges".
Chambers and Partners 2019*



Our practice areas

Public Law and Human Rights

Public law and human rights cases are often at the cutting edge of legal developments in the UK and serve to help maintain the balance between the interests of the individual and the State. For many years, Blackstone Chambers has been the home of barristers dedicated to ensuring that the rights and interests not only of individuals but also of regulatory bodies and companies are recognised and protected. Our members act in human rights cases and judicial review both for and against public bodies. We are involved in areas including freedom of expression, immigration, education, planning, housing and local government.

Blackstone Chambers is particularly noted for its ability to provide commercial advice in a public law context. Because of our strength in commercial and public law, we are able to offer expertise in regulatory and other areas which cross both sectors.

In addition to the Brexit and prorogation litigation mentioned in the Forward, examples of other cases are:

R (Miller) v The Prime Minister and Cherry and ors v Advocate General for Scotland

Between 17-19 September 2019, the Supreme Court heard arguments in the legal challenge to the prime minister, Boris Johnson's decision to prorogue Parliament. The Court concluded that the Prime Minister's advice to Her Majesty was unlawful, void or of no effect and Gina Miller's appeal was allowed and the Advocate General's appeal in the case of Cherry was dismissed.

R (Elan Cane) v SoS Home Department [2020] EWCA Civ 363

A challenge brought by non-gendered campaigner Christie Elan-Cane, to the Government's policy of refusing to issue non gender-specific 'X' passports. The Court of Appeal has dismissed both Christie Elan-Cane's appeal and the Secretary of State's cross-appeal on the separate issue of the correct approach to reductions to costs caps in public interest proceedings.

Uber London Limited v Transport for London

This was on The Lawyer's list of Top 20 Cases of 2018 where two members of Chambers acted for Uber in its successful appeal against the decision of Transport for London to refuse to renew its licence as a private hire operator in London. The original refusal by TfL led to complaints by more than 750,000 customers, and to political exchanges involving the Prime Minister and the Mayor of London.

Employment

Members of Blackstone Chambers undertake a complete range of contentious employment work both for employers and employees. They advise on matters ranging from high value or complex High Court employment disputes, including restrictive covenants, injunctions, confidentiality, TUPE and garden leave, to the entire gamut of issues in the employment tribunals, from unfair dismissal and equal pay to discrimination issues in all their forms. The expansion of anti-discrimination legislation and the application of the Equality Act 2010 provide an ever expanding range of issues on which advice and representation is sought by both employers and employees alike.

Many employment cases, due to confidentiality issues, do not hit the headlines but interesting cases in the field have included:

Morrisons plc v Various Claimants [2020] UKSC 12

In this case two members of Chambers acted for Morrisons in the Supreme Court on whether the company is vicariously liable for the criminal acts of its employee in releasing the personal data of other employees onto the internet having regard to the EU Data Protection Directive.

Shearwood v C&J Clark International Ltd (2019)

Two members acted for Clarks, the well-known footwear business, in the successful defence of a high-value and high-profile whistleblowing unfair dismissal claim brought by its former CEO. They also acted in defence of a related High Court wrongful dismissal claim.

R (Unison) v Lord Chancellor [2017] UKSC 51

Two members of Chambers led the successful judicial review challenge by Unison to the new fees regime for employment tribunal cases with the ultimate success in the Supreme Court allowing UNISON's appeal and leading to the removal of the fees structure which had been imposed.

ICAP v Berry & BGC [2017] EWHC 1321 (QB)

This case, where three members of Chambers successfully defended BGC is now cited as a leading authority on garden leave and inducement of breach of contract.

“Pre-eminent public law set which can boast “a stable of thoroughbred silks and ranks of top juniors” who “remain absolutely at the forefront” of the field.”

Chambers and Partners

Our practice areas

EU and Competition

Competition and European law expertise is an integral part of the specialist practices of individuals in Blackstone Chambers. The range of specialist knowledge to be found among the many barristers at Blackstone Chambers who practice in competition and EU law includes US antitrust, mergers, jurisdiction issues, free movement, the control of misleading advertising, judicial review and parallel importation. Expansion of work in this area has seen an increase in the number of cases working their way through the Competition Appeals Tribunal.

Members of Blackstone Chambers regularly act on behalf of UK and multinational corporations and for the UK Government, the governments of other EU Member States and Candidate States, European Institutions, and a full range of regulators across a wide spectrum of industries, as well as for other public bodies. While the picture of litigation in this sector will alter when the UK exits the EU, we are confident that the skills and knowledge of our many practitioners will continue to be deployed assisting clients navigate the issues which “Brexit” will bring.

Various case examples include:

Schenker and Deutsche Bahn and others v European Commission

This case involved acting successfully for the European Commission in proceedings before the General Court in defence of a decision imposing fines totalling €800 million on participants in an international freight-forwarding cartel. The case raises many important issues concerning the scope of the Commission’s powers to find breaches of competition law, and the rules of evidence in infringement proceedings.

Cambridge Analytica

This case concerned the alleged misuse of personal data belonging to more than 71 million people to develop “political propaganda campaigns” in the UK and the US and Facebook’s failure to protect the data of its users.

Canary Wharf v European Medicines Agency

Did the legal requirement for the EMA (an EU Agency) to move from the UK to a Member State frustrate its 25-year lease? The first of its kind in “visible” Brexit litigation.

Case C-171/18 Safeway Limited v Newton

The claim raises significant issues concerning the right to equal treatment for male and female members of occupational pension schemes, with potentially huge financial consequences for similar schemes across the UK.

R(Gallaher Group Ltd) v Competition and Markets Authority [2018] UKSC 26 (Supreme Court)

A ground-breaking case concerning duties of equal treatment and substantive fairness where the Supreme Court held, in a controversial judgment that domestic administrative law did not recognise distinct duties of equal treatment or substantive fairness.

Veolia Environnement SA and others v Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV and others “Trucks Cartel”

The largest competition law damages case in 2018/2019, with litigation arising from the Commission’s decisions relating to the alleged trucks cartel. Encompasses High Court and CAT proceedings, including CPO proceedings.



International Law

This is a highly specialised practice area and Blackstone Chambers is experienced in advising and representing governments, corporate bodies and individual litigants on international disputes, constitutional affairs and human rights issues before a range of international courts. Barristers have particular experience in international boundary disputes, state and diplomatic immunity and international protection of human rights. They appear regularly before the International Court of Justice, international arbitration tribunals (for example ICSID, the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes) and before domestic courts in cases involving issues of public international law.

In addition to the litigation flowing from such disputes, members of Chambers are able to become involved in the development of law in other related ways such as:

R (Bancoult) v Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs [2019] EWCA Civ 1254

Judicial review of a decision by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to conclude that resettlement of the Chagos Archipelago would not be supported by the UK Government. This was a challenge to the UK’s refusal to allow the Chagos Islanders to resettle on the Chagos Islands. It involves an enormous and complex disclosure exercise with issue of public interest immunity and the use of special advocates, across multiple Whitehall departments.

Rule of Law in Turkey (Government of Turkey v Talip Buyk, Hamdi Akin Celik and Ali Ipek)

Drafting a report on the protection of fundamental rights in contemporary Turkey and acting as expert witness in an extradition case against three Turks by the Erdogan Government. The advice was accepted in the case: *Government of the Republic of Turkey v Buyek and others*, Westminster Magistrate’s Court, 26 November 2018.

The effect of Brexit on Gibraltar

Advising the Attorney General of Gibraltar on options to continue membership of the EU after Brexit.

- The recent appointment of Tim Otty QC as the UK’s representative on the Council of Europe’s European Commission for Democracy through Law, the Venice Commission, a position previously held by another member of these Chambers, Sir Jeffrey Jowell QC.
- Work by members of Chambers for the Human Dignity Trust providing sophisticated pro bono technical legal assistance to local activists and civil society organisations across five continents.
- Shaheed Fatima QC chaired the Legal Panel to the Inquiry on Protecting Children in Conflict by Gordon Brown, former UK Prime Minister, and is the lead author of the book together with a team of barristers from Blackstone Chambers that was produced as part of the Inquiry: *Protecting Children in Armed Conflict* (2018, Hart/Bloomsbury Publishing).

Our practice areas

Within our broad practice range, there are a number of industry sectors where members of Blackstone Chambers are known for their expertise including:

Sport

Blackstone Chambers has considerable experience across all areas of sports law including agency, broadcasting, contract, disciplinary, drugs, employment, image rights, regulation, sponsorship, state aid and ticketing. We have developed a leading reputation for sports law in part through our existing strengths in complementary fields of practice, notably: public law, EU and competition, commercial law, human rights and employment law. As a result, Blackstone Chambers attracts a range of clients, from major sports governing bodies to sporting individuals, teams, clubs, agents and broadcasters. The range is huge, but example cases include:

Premier Rugby Limited v Saracens

A member of Chambers acts for the PRL in its proceedings against Saracens for a breach of the salary cap. Saracens defended on the basis that the salary cap was competition law and that the arrangements it had did not involve provisions of salary to players. An independent tribunal rejected both defences, fined Saracens £5.3million and deducted 35 points.

FIFA v Football Association

Disciplinary proceedings brought by FIFA arising from alleged breaches of FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players in relation to youth players who trialled at Chelsea FC or attended its academy over the last 10 years. The case has significant implications for the liability of all international football associations for breaches of the FIFA Regulations by their members clubs.

UTB LLC v. Sheffield United Limited

Acting for UTB, one of the 50% owners of Sheffield United Football Club in respect of a dispute over the control of the club with the other 50% owner, SUL. UTB is ultimately owned by the Saudi Prince, Prince Abdullah Bin Mosaad Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and SUL by Kevin McCabe. The dispute is about the proper construction of the Investment and Shareholder Agreement between the owners and in unfair prejudice and will determine the ownership of the Club.

Russian Athletics Federation v International Association of Athletics Federations

Two members acted for the IAAF in the Court of Arbitration for Sport in an arbitration commenced by RusAF to challenge the IAAF's decision not to reinstate RusAF to full unsuspended membership. The Russian organisation had been suspended following the McLaren Report concluding that there had been organised evasion of the anti-doping rules in Russia.

Media and Entertainment

Members of Chambers act for a wide range of film, theatre and record companies, book, music and newspaper publishers as well as numerous performers, directors and producers and have been involved in many of the major disputes in this field. Often work in this sector will include issues of copyright and other 'soft' intellectual property issues covering issues as wide ranging as:

Sony ATV v Le Bon & Ors

Members of Chambers acted for the Claimant owners of copyrights in Duran Duran songs in their successful claims for declarations that the band have severed copyright termination notices under the US agreement in breach of contract. The case settled shortly before the Court of Appeal hearing.

Sheeran & Ors v Chokri & Ors

Acted for Ed Sheeran and others, the co-writers and publishers of the song "Shape of You" where the Claimants sought a declaration that they had not infringed any copyrights of the Defendants in writing and exploiting that song.

Duchess of York v Mazher Mahmood & News Group Newspapers (2016 -2019)

A case arising from the "sting" in which the Duchess allegedly offered access to Prince Andrew in return for cash. It raised interesting and novel questions in respect of deceit and conspiracy in the field of privacy, confidentiality and data protection.

Telecommunications

Blackstone Chambers has a significant telecommunications practice, building on its expertise in commercial, public law and regulatory matters. Members of Chambers advise and represent regulators, operators and consumers on issues including regulatory, public law and competition. Issues cover fixed line and mobile networks and services, as well as internet-related matters relevant to telecommunications, including by-pass, interconnection and VoIP issues. Other areas of advice include the construction of licences, arbitration clauses, and the effect of constitutional freedom of expression and property guarantees on exclusivity.

Unwired Planet & Conversant v Huawei & ZTE [2020] UKSC 37

Since 2014, members of Chambers have acted for parties in this high-profile matter concerning global telecommunications licensing. The Supreme Court's long-awaited judgment in the Unwired Planet and Conversant appeals upheld the decisions of the Court of Appeal and High Court in both sets of proceedings.

"The Restitution of Annual Licence Fees Claim"

Vodafone Limited and others v OFCOM a multi-party trial in the Commercial Court in May 2019 following interlocutory hearings in 2018 concerning claims for restitution of annual licence fees exceeding £200 million brought by four mobile network operators following the Court of Appeal's judgment finding the setting of these fees to be unlawful. This involved twelve members of Chambers acting for different parties to the action.

"The 5G Auction Appeal"

(1) Hutchinson 3G UK Limited (2) British Telecommunications Plc v OFCOM [2018] EWCA Civ 284; [2017] EWHC 3376 (Admin) involving eight members of Chambers and a number of parties in an appeal to the Court of Appeal in which Hutchison 3G and others sought judicial review of Ofcom's decision on the auction of 2.3 GHz and 3.4 GHz spectrum.

Our practice areas

Banking and Financial Services

Blackstone members have broad experience in banking and financial services including an extensive regulatory practice acting both for and against a variety of financial and other regulatory authorities, corporations and individuals. Members have advised extensively in relation to the Financial Services and Markets Act, advising regulators, approved persons and others on aspects including authorisations, listing rules, market abuse, financial promotion, collective investment schemes, and disclosure.

Members of Chambers also undertake a range of asset finance and banking litigation cases. Other areas of practice include pensions review, cases of alleged insider trading, professional negligence, and the impact of the Human Rights Act upon enforcement procedures of self-regulatory organisations. Examples include:

FCA v Standard Chartered Bank

The FCA imposed a fine of £102,163,200 on Standard Chartered Bank for Anti-Money Laundering breaches. This matter was one of the first to involve a Focused Resolution Agreement whereby the Bank agreed the FCA's findings of fact and liability, whilst reserving its right to argue that the proposed penalty was too high. As a result of entering into the Focused Resolution Agreement, the Bank secured a 30% settlement discount on whatever was determined to be the appropriate penalty.

DFSA v Waterhouse

Two members of Chambers represented the Dubai financial services regulator in its first substantive Tribunal hearing. The case, which has been heard in both London and Dubai, involves allegations concerning banking compliance in the "off-shore" Dubai International Financial Centre.

Law Debenture Trust v Ukraine

This case concerns a \$3 billion claim brought by Russia for non-repayment of Eurobonds and raises issues of foreign act of state and justiciability of the threats made against Ukraine by Russia.

Roman Pipia v BGEO Group LTD

Concerning a £300 million claim against the London parent of a Georgian banking group arising out of allegedly unlawful asset-grabbing and intimidation.

Tesco market abuse Final Notice

Two members acting for the FCA in respect of its issuance of a Final Notice finding that Tesco Plc and Tesco Stores Ltd had committed market abuse by publishing a trading update which gave a false or misleading impression of Tesco Plc's share and bond prices. In a landmark approach to compensation, the FCA exercised for the first time its power under section 384 of FSMA to require a listed company to make restitution to affected investors for the market abuse, imposing by agreement a compensation scheme with an estimated value of some £85 million.

R(Holmcroft) v KPMG LLP and others

One of The Lawyer's Top 20 cases of 2016, which in 2018 was heard by the Court of Appeal and at which seven members of Chambers appeared. The case concerned whether a decision made by a firm of accountants, when acting as a skilled person under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, may be challenged by way of judicial review but also raised legal issues of wider importance concerning the circumstances in which a private body may be amenable to judicial review.

In addition to these many and varied specialisms, some of our members have areas of expertise which fall outside our core areas. For instance, we also have strength in areas such as privacy, lotteries and gaming, and environmental law.



'Top-notch set' Blackstone Chambers has 'great strength in depth, from the QCs through to the juniors'.
Legal 500

Pupillage at Blackstone Chambers

The work

We believe that pupils should be involved in every aspect of their pupil supervisor's work. It is very varied as can be seen from some of the examples set out in this brochure or in the News section of our website. We give our pupils a rounded overview of a barrister's role, and equip them for the legal and practical challenges they will face in practice.

As a pupil at Blackstone Chambers, you will have four supervisors through the year. Pupil supervisors are chosen to ensure that each pupil gets a solid grounding in the three core areas of Chambers' work – commercial, employment, and public law. Beyond that core, you will experience your supervisors' particular areas of expertise. In recent years, for example, supervisors have been experts in areas including competition law, immigration law, and financial regulation.

Pupillage at Blackstone Chambers is very much a hands-on experience. From your first day with your supervisor you will get stuck into whatever cases your supervisor is instructed on at that moment. The typical work involves doing first drafts of the documents which your pupil supervisor is working on. You will therefore develop a wide experience of drafting pleadings and other court documents, writing skeleton arguments and compiling written advices. You may also be asked to do a first draft of questions to be used in a cross examination, or to prepare opening or closing submissions.

You will also be involved in every step of the advisory and litigation process. Pupils attend conferences with clients, listen in on phone conversations where appropriate, and are encouraged to discuss the strategic, procedural and ethical elements of cases with their supervisors.

The emphasis which we place on the close working relationship between pupil and supervisor means that pupils do not do any additional work for other members of Chambers. You will be able to focus entirely on the cases which you are involved in on a day-to-day basis.

Because Blackstone pupils are exposed to such a wide range of legal areas, the whole year is non-practising, which means that pupils do not take on any of their own paid work during pupillage. On the other hand, we strongly encourage our pupils to take on pro bono cases with FRU or other charities, and we will provide support and ensure that you have the time you need to dedicate to pro bono work.



Pupillage at Blackstone Chambers

The training

Pupillage is, first and foremost, about giving you the skills you need to be a barrister. We are proud of our reputation for providing a legal training which is second to none.

The first week of pupillage at Blackstone Chambers is an induction week. We have specifically designed the week to help pupils get the most out of pupillage: we introduce you to the members of Chambers, the staff, the resources available, and we explain many of the mechanics of work as a pupil and a barrister. We have found this week invaluable for settling pupils into their new role.

The core of your education at Blackstone Chambers is the interaction you will have with your pupil supervisor. We believe it is vital that pupils are with their supervisors at every step of the legal process, and not isolated from the real action.

Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with supervisors. Pupil supervisors also strive to give constructive feedback on every piece of written work which their pupil produces; whilst we cannot promise that there is always time to meet this ambition, you will certainly receive ample detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement during your year.

We also build in a structured programme of feedback to give a more general picture of our pupils' progress. Before you leave one pupil supervisor for a new one, your old supervisor will complete a form commenting on your progress across a wide range of skill sets – from written work to interactions with clients – and suggesting areas for you to work on. You will be given a copy, and it will form the basis of a constructive discussion with you before you move on to your next supervisor.

Pupils also have the benefit of detailed feedback from other members of Chambers through our programme of assessed work. Through the year, pupils do five pieces of assessed written work, each of which must be completed over a period of two days. The work is then assessed, typically by one senior and one junior member of Chambers. As the name suggests, one purpose is for us to gain an objective view of pupils' progress. But equally important is that it provides a structured opportunity for pupils to receive intensive feedback from other members of Chambers. We take this role extremely seriously, and all markers spend time discussing the work with the pupils.

Last, but certainly not least, is the advocacy training which we provide. A team of our barristers, who are experienced advocates and trained advocacy trainers, provide a programme designed to equip pupils for the kinds of cases they are likely to face in the first years of practice. Covering witness handling and legal submissions, we build on what you learn at bar school and at your Inn. The advocacy sessions will be watched by the other pupils, the Chambers Director, and two or three members of Chambers as trainers. In total, we provide seven advocacy sessions. The last four of them are assessed, meaning that your performance will be taken into account should you apply for tenancy in Chambers.

Applicants are sometimes surprised by the number of 'assessments' which our pupils do. But we have found them to be an invaluable way of giving structured feedback to pupils. It is also a way of making fair and objective comparisons. Remember that, wherever you do pupillage, you will be 'assessed' on a daily basis. We feel that the fact that we have formalised the process, and built in intensive feedback sessions, is a real benefit for our pupils and for Chambers. Pupils also tell us that their year is a far less stressful experience because they know that the assessment process is clear and fair.



The lifestyle

Blackstone Chambers is a friendly and inclusive environment, and as a pupil you will be integrated into Chambers' life. You will sit with your supervisor, not in an annexe away from the action, and you will be invited to Chambers' social events.

As you would expect, barristers at Blackstone Chambers work hard. On the other hand, we recognise that most people work best when they have a sensible work-life balance. We judge our pupils by the quality of their work, not the quantity. Thus when we say we expect pupils to work Monday to Friday, from around 8.30/9.00 to 6.00/6.30, we mean it. Pupils in Chambers any later are often urged to go home. So whilst there may be times when you choose to work longer hours, you will rarely be expected to.

Pupils are entitled to 20 days of holiday per year plus bank holidays, and we normally require pupils to take 10 days in their first six, at Christmas and Easter, and 10 days in the summer of their second six. In line with our policy of encouraging the best applicants from all backgrounds and walks of life, we are open to discussing any particular requirements you may have in terms of balancing work and other commitments. Please feel free to contact us for a confidential discussion.

The finances

We currently offer a pupillage award of £70,000 for pupillages commencing in 2022. Pupils may apply to draw down up to £20,000 during their BPTC year. These figures are not affected if, like many of our pupils, you are successful in obtaining further financial assistance from your Inn. (Our awards may be reviewed during the currency of the application process).

Pupillage at Blackstone Chambers

The Tenancy decision

At present, Blackstone Chambers' policy is one of gradual expansion. We do not operate a quota for tenancies. Chambers has space to expand and is looking to take on outstanding candidates. It is our general practice to recruit starter tenants only from our own pupils. We are optimistic about the future of Chambers and our ability to meet the challenges of a changing legal world. Over the past few years we have taken on new tenants each year, and we intend to do so for the foreseeable future.

The statistics speak for themselves: over the past 10 years we have taken on 28 tenants from our annual pupillage intake, accepting between 2 and 4 pupil tenants a year. In the last 3 years we have taken on 9 tenants from this category. On the other hand, you will appreciate that we cannot offer tenancy to everyone who applies. We therefore invest a lot of time ensuring that our tenancy decisions are entirely fair, and that the process is as transparent as possible.

We normally take tenancy decisions in early July each year. We will tell you the date well in advance. The decision is taken by a vote of the whole of Chambers. The information on which members of Chambers base their decision on is feedback from your pupil supervisors, your assessed work, and your performance in the advocacy training. At the meeting, all members of Chambers are given the opportunity of expressing their views on candidates. However, because of our policy of not allowing pupils to do work for other members of Chambers, there is no chance that any pupil will be unfairly advantaged simply because they happened to work on a particular case.

The alternatives

Pupils who do not stay on as tenants at Blackstone Chambers have a wide range of options. The high quality of our training and of our pupils is known and respected across the profession. Furthermore, if you are not offered tenancy here, your pupil supervisors and others in Chambers will pull out all the stops to help you to find a place at another set of chambers which fits your interests. This usually means doing a third six months of pupillage there, although sometimes pupils go straight into tenancy elsewhere. In recent years, pupils who have not stayed on at Blackstone have gone on to successful practice in other top sets of chambers.

Life as a Tenant

Your professional life as a member of Blackstone Chambers will be an attractive one. You will work hard, but you will be your own boss. We enjoy our professional lives and work in a friendly atmosphere. We work as individuals although, of course, we have many common interests as members of the Chambers. However, you will not be a mere number in a vast office. You are responsible for your own work but you should feel free to consult with your colleagues and to draw on the collective expertise of Chambers. You should never be just one brick in a pyramid of delegated work.

*"If variety is the spice of life, then Blackstone should be selling dishes of suicide hot wings alongside its impeccable legal counsel".
Chambers Student Guide 2019*

As a junior tenant you can expect a broad mix of advisory and advocacy work. At the more junior end of Chambers there is County Court and employment tribunal work, and even very occasionally some Magistrates Court work. You will also find yourself involved in High Court litigation from an early stage in your career, in particular dealing with interlocutory applications. You will also be instructed as a Junior assisting a Silk in larger cases and in advisory work. We place a very heavy emphasis on giving our junior barristers a range of experience from covering their own smaller cases to assisting on large cases. You will certainly have a varied and stimulating life.

It is our experience that our junior tenants very soon begin to make a good living at the Bar. Of course, the earnings of individual barristers do vary. However, within a short time of commencing practice the earnings of junior tenants in these Chambers are certainly comparable to those of assistant solicitors of comparable length of experience. Over time, we are confident that your income will stand favourable comparison with that of any other professional person.

Chambers' expenses, including rent, are shared between members of Chambers in proportion to their receipts in the previous year. The Chambers' financial year commences at the beginning of April. Accordingly, and on the basis of a tenancy commencing in October, you will pay no Chambers expenses or rent for your first six months in Chambers; in the following year, you will only pay a modest amount proportionate to your receipts in those first six months.

Members of Chambers are fully aware of the financial strains encountered by tenants establishing their careers at the Bar. In order to try to ameliorate any difficulties, Chambers offers new junior tenants an interest free loan of up to £30,000 at the beginning of their first practice year, repayable at the end of 15 months in practice.

And what do two of our junior tenants say...?



Dominic Howells

I didn't grow up dreaming of being a lawyer. I read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at university and afterwards spent six years working in mergers and acquisitions. If you haven't studied law at university, becoming a barrister takes three years as a minimum: the law conversion course, the bar course and the year of pupillage.

Being a barrister has a number of distinctive qualities when compared to other professional jobs. The most important for me is that the intellectual aspect marches together with practical considerations in deciding how to advise clients or present arguments in court. The most dramatic in terms of its effect on daily life is that all barristers in chambers are self-employed. That means not having a boss, not being anyone's boss and earning the product of your own labour.

Spending a year doing pupillage at Blackstone Chambers is a great preparation for life as a tenant because you get to see work in a wide range of Chambers' different practice areas. Pupillage involves receiving training and being assessed throughout the year. That is a somewhat stressful combination wherever it is undertaken, but the process at Blackstone at least seems even-handed and free from political intrigues.

At the time of writing I've spent one year in practice, having started as a tenant in September 2017. During that year I've done a great variety of work including commercial law, public law, employment, sports, music and film, tax, regulatory, competition and fraud cases. In many of these cases I have acted as sole counsel and in some I have been led by more senior barristers.

Junior barristers at Blackstone Chambers are expected to accept instructions in all of Chambers' practice areas and to do both led and un-led work. That is not to say, however, that you won't have any influence over what you take on. The work I have done this year has reflected my preferences, both as to subject matter and in my wish to get a good amount of advocacy experience.

Being a junior barrister is hard work, but just how many hours you spend in chambers depends on how industrious/avaricious you are. It appears possible to combine practice as a junior barrister with a normal home and social life and still to achieve earnings which are favourably comparable with those of newly qualified solicitors at the U.S. firms in London.

Those facing the embarras de richesses of multiple pupillage offers at top sets might wonder what there is to distinguish them. The variety of work a Blackstone is unique among the leading sets of chambers. It's not easy to tell before undertaking pupillage what kinds of work are going to be the most interesting or rewarding, so having a lot of options as a junior barrister is a distinct advantage. I would also say in Blackstone's favour that it is a friendly and collegiate place. There is quite a mix of different personalities which makes it easy to be oneself. There's a lively social side if one is looking for that but it's also entirely acceptable to go home when one's work is done.



Gayatri Sarathy

I joined Chambers as a tenant in September 2018. Before coming to the Bar, I studied law at the University of Oxford. I also worked as a research assistant in the public law team at the Law Commission and volunteered with an NGO.

For me, being a barrister offers a unique combination of engaging intellectually with complex legal issues and thinking practically about how they are resolved and presented before a court. There is rarely a dull moment and my days are full of variety: whether that is researching for an advice; advising clients in conference; drafting written submissions; or appearing in court. Being self-employed means that you are in control of when and how long you work.

Pupillage is very useful preparation for the beginning of your career at the Bar. Each pupil shadows the same four members of Chambers in different areas of practice, alongside written and advocacy assessments. During that time, you attend court with your pupil supervisor and draft notes on the law, pleadings and skeleton arguments. It is rigorous, but also incredibly fair. You are given regular feedback from pupil supervisors and advocacy trainers, who are two senior members of Chambers. You are not required to work for any other members of Chambers. Whilst it is a year-long assessment, it is also invaluable training as a lawyer and an advocate.

Why Blackstone? First, as a junior tenant, there is a huge diversity of work on offer and you are encouraged to maintain a broad practice in your early years (though there is opportunity to specialise if you would like). That is important because there are areas of law you may enjoy academically and not in practice or vice versa, or areas of law that you may never have studied, like sports law. My first year has involved a real mix of commercial, employment and public law — both on my own and in teams with other members of Chambers. A particular highlight was being involved in the Privacy International case with Dinah Rose QC, Ben Jaffey QC, Sir Jeffrey Jowell QC and Tom Cleaver before the Supreme Court.

Beyond this, the environment in Chambers is supportive and collegiate. Every door is open to ask a question and there are weekly drinks which, in the summer months, are held on the roof terrace. It is a privilege to be part of Chambers and I would wholeheartedly encourage everyone to apply.

Applying for Pupillage

Pupillage standards

Except in exceptional circumstances, all pupillage applicants must have either an upper second class or a first class degree; it is by no means necessary for that degree to be in law. The overriding criterion for award of a pupillage is merit. We are looking to recruit pupils of high academic ability and outstanding personal qualities, irrespective of race, disability, age, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Pupillage application procedure 2020/2021

Blackstone Chambers will be a member of Pupillage Gateway for applications for pupillage commencing in September 2022. Our pupillage procedure has been tailored to fit with the Pupillage Gateway timetabling and the Bar Council's requirements.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Complete your Pupillage Gateway application and submit it via the Pupillage Gateway website www.pupillagegateway.com within the applications window. The submissions window for Pupillage Gateway applications opens on 4th January 2021 and closes on 8th February 2021. Do try to submit your application as early as possible within the applications window.
2. Pupillage interviews are likely to be held in late April 2021. The exact date has not yet been fixed, but we will try to let you know well in advance. Offers for pupillage for 2022 will be made on 7th May 2021, in line with the Pupillage Gateway timetabling.

Please note that the referencing procedure requires applicants to submit their references to us at the time of making their initial application. More details about referees and references can be found on our website. Any interview for pupillage by the Pupillage Committee normally takes place during the year preceding the year in which applicants wish to start pupillage. This is, however, not an inflexible rule. The Pupillage Committee is sometimes prepared to interview an applicant at another time.

Applicants seeking a second or third six months' pupillage following a pupillage in another set of Chambers are normally considered shortly before the time when they wish to come to these Chambers.



Applying for Pupillage

Mini-Pupillage applications

Every applicant for pupillage at Blackstone Chambers must complete an assessed mini-pupillage. Our preference is for mini-pupils to come to Chambers some time in the months up to mid-April of the summer before they start their Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC).

We welcome repeat applications from candidates. However please note: if you have been unsuccessful previously in an application to Blackstone Chambers, the Pupillage Committee will generally wish to see evidence of positive changes in your application if you are to be a realistic candidate for mini pupillage or pupillage in a later application year.

As a mini-pupil you will spend three days in Chambers, so that you can gain a useful insight into life at Blackstone Chambers. You will normally be attached to one or two members of Chambers, but will also have the opportunity of seeing the work of others. The object of a mini-pupillage is for you to get to know us and for us to get to know you. Since space in Chambers for mini-pupils is limited, please only apply if you are seriously interested in applying to these Chambers for pupillage in the future.

Mini-pupils are assessed by their mini-pupil supervisor at the end of their stay in Chambers, and those assessments are taken into account in deciding whether to invite you for an interview for pupillage. Since the assessed mini-pupillage is an essential part of the overall pupillage applications procedure, we offer financial assistance for out of pocket travel or accommodation expenses incurred in attending the mini-pupillage, up to a maximum of £250 per mini-pupil.

The process for applying for mini-pupillage is as follows:

1. Applications for mini-pupillage should be made on Chambers' own application form via our online system. Although you are not obliged to complete the Monitoring Form, we would ask you to do so in order to help us carry out monitoring as required in the Bar Standards Board Handbook.
2. If you have any queries regarding your application, please send them to pupillage@blackstonechambers.com
3. Any applicant for pupillage with Blackstone Chambers who is called to an interview for mini-pupillage will only be offered a mini-pupillage on the understanding that he/she intends to apply or has applied through Pupillage Gateway for pupillage at Blackstone Chambers.
4. We encourage possible applicants to apply as early as possible in their final year (if they are law undergraduates) or during the first few months of their GDL year (if they are non-law graduates) for the assessed mini-pupillage. We will be accepting applications from 1st September 2020 for assessed mini pupillages for those wishing to apply for pupillages commencing in 2022. The closing date for applications for such assessed mini-pupillages is on 4th January 2021.
5. We will try to call candidates for mini-pupillage to interview as early as possible and we will continue to interview for mini-pupillage and offer mini-pupillages until the mid-April of 2021.
6. There will be a further, pupillage, interview for those who have been short-listed by us following mini-pupillages in Blackstone Chambers. These pupillage interviews will take place in late April 2021.

“Blackstone Chambers is praised for its ‘strong expertise across a range of areas’, with ‘some genuine heavyweight advocates at the more senior end, together with really impressive juniors who will no doubt be stars of the future.’
Chambers Student Guide 2020

Equal opportunities

The barristers and clerks of Blackstone Chambers are fully committed to the principle of equality of opportunity irrespective of race, disability, age, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Candidates for pupillage and tenancy are assessed, and offers of pupillage or tenancy are made, solely on merit. Opportunities for training, gaining experience, and practice development are provided to all pupils and members of Chambers without regard to race, disability, age, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

Since December 2019, Blackstone Chambers has commissioned the use of the Rare Contextual Recruitment System (CRS) for our mini-pupillage and pupillage recruitment processes. Rare is a multi-award-winning diversity company using big data to map the social, financial and educational background of candidates and make sure that brilliant candidates are identified and given the chance to flourish. According to Rare, 61% more disadvantaged candidates were hired when organisations adopted the CRS. This also enables Blackstone Chambers to pursue legitimate interests of fair recruitment (Article 6(1)(e) GDPR).

All employees are appointed or promoted solely on merit. Terms and conditions of employment and opportunities for training are provided to employees without regard to race, disability, age, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.



Assessed Mini-Pupillage application form and guidance notes

Please read the following notes which should assist you in completing our mini-pupillage application form and monitoring form. You can apply online at: www.blackstonechambers.com/pupillage

Blackstone Chambers is a member of Pupillage Gateway. For more information about Pupillage Gateway please refer to the Pupillage Gateway website www.pupillagegateway.com or contact the Bar Council via telephone 020 7242 0082, or visit their website: www.barcouncil.org.uk

Mini-Pupillage: applications deadline

No pupillage will be offered at Blackstone Chambers unless the applicant has undertaken an assessed mini-pupillage. We encourage possible applicants for pupillage to apply as early as possible in their final year (if they are law undergraduates) or during the first few months of their GDL year (if they are non-law graduates) for the assessed mini-pupillage. We will try to call candidates for mini-pupillage to interview as early as possible and we will continue to interview for mini-pupillage and offer mini-pupillages until April 2021.

We will be accepting applications from 1st September 2020 for assessed mini-pupillages for those wishing to apply for pupillages commencing in 2022. The closing date for applications for such assessed mini-pupillages is on 4th January 2021.

Assessed Mini-Pupillage application form and guidance notes

Mini-Pupillage: financial assistance

Since we insist on an assessed mini-pupillage as part of the overall pupillage applications procedure, we have decided to offer financial assistance either in respect of out of pocket travel or accommodation expenses incurred in attending the mini-pupillage, up to a maximum of £250 per mini-pupil. Please contact Julia Hornor (Chambers Director) for further details.

Mini-Pupillage: application form

We would very much like applicants to complete our own mini-pupillage application form using our online application system. We would also like you to complete the monitoring form (which is, as you will see, identified by number only). You are not obliged to do so, but the form gives Chambers the information it needs to be able to implement a full equal opportunities policy. It will be filed separately from your application before our selection procedure begins, and completion or otherwise of the form will in no way affect your application.

References

In addition to completion of the online form we ask you to forward at least 2 academic references direct to pupillage@blackstonechambers.com at the time of making your initial application to us.

Please note that references are vital and it is your responsibility as an applicant to ensure that they are sent directly to Chambers when you apply. We will not ourselves seek or chase up references if they are missing and this could seriously delay or forestall your application if the references are not supplied to us. You may supply more references if you wish. If you are a GDL candidate we ask that you forward at least two references from your previous undergraduate/post-graduate studies.



Members of Chambers

Heads of Chambers

Monica Carss-Frisk QC

Tony Peto QC

Sir David Edward QC

Stanley Brodie QC

Lord Woolf of Barnes

Michael Beloff QC

David Donaldson QC

Robert Englehart QC

David Hunt QC

Barbara Dohmann QC

Maurice Mendelson QC

Jonathan Harvie QC

Lord Pannick QC

Sir Jeffrey Jowell QC

Stephen Nathan QC

John Howell QC

Lord Keen of Elie QC

Charles Flint QC

Michael Bloch QC

Ian Mill QC

Harish Salve QC

Paul Goulding QC

Mark Shaw QC

Robert Anderson QC

Dinah Rose QC

Timothy Otty QC

Sir James Eadie QC

Robert Howe QC

Adam Lewis QC

Alan Maclean QC

Andrew Green QC

Javan Herberg QC

Sam Grodzinski QC

Andrew Hunter QC

Thomas de la Mare QC

Kieron Beal QC

Tom Weisselberg QC

Jane Mulcahy QC

Kate Gallafent QC

Andreas Gledhill QC

Andrew George QC

Adrian Briggs QC

Gemma White QC

Brian Kennelly QC

Shaheed Fatima QC

Ivan Hare QC

Ben Jaffey QC

Thomas Croxford QC

Catherine Callaghan QC

Nick De Marco QC

Charlotte Kilroy QC

Diya Sen Gupta QC

Tom Hickman QC

David Pievsky QC

James Segan QC

Joanna Pollard

Jane Collier

Emma Dixon

Stephanie Palmer

Leona Powell

Victoria Windle

Mark Vinall

Sarah Wilkinson

Robert Weekes

Catherine Donnelly

Iain Steele

Naina Patel

Tom Richards

Tristan Jones

Adam Baradon

Christopher McCrudden

Hanif Mussa

Simon Pritchard

Jessica Boyd

David Lowe

Emily Neill

Peter Head

Paul Luckhurst

Tom Cleaver

Tom Mountford

Tim Parker

Andrew Scott

Shane Sibbel

Fraser Campbell

Craig Rajgopaul

Ravi Mehta

Daniel Burgess

Harry Adamson

Jason Pobjoy

Jana Sadler-Forster

Kerenza Davis

Tom Coates

Eesvan Krishnan

Daniel Cashman

Ajay Ratan

Flora Robertson

Celia Rooney

George Molyneux

Navid Pourghazi

Isabel Buchanan

Andrew Trotter

Hollie Higgins

Dominic Howells

Natasha Simonsen

Gayatri Sarathy

Timothy Lau

Rachel Jones

Carmine Conte

Warren Fitt

Tom Lowenthal

Will Bordell

Barnaby Lowe

Emmeline Plews



Telephone: +44(0) 207 583 1770
Email: clerks@blackstonechambers.com
www.blackstonechambers.com