

BLACKSTONE CHAMBERS
POLICY STATEMENT

Recruitment and appointment of Academic research panellists

I. GENERAL

1. This Policy Statement reflects Chambers' adherence to the principles of Equality and Diversity set out in the BSB Handbook. It has been formulated taking account of the Guidelines set out in the BSB Handbook Equality Rules Supporting Information document ("the Guidelines").
2. This Policy Statement sets out the policy of Chambers regarding the recruitment of Academic Research Panel members ("Panellists").
3. A copy of this Policy Statement relating to the recruitment of Panellists will be published on Chambers' website and will be available on request.
4. The primary purpose of the Academic Research Panel is to provide a research resource for members of Chambers in appropriate circumstances.
5. Membership of the Academic Research Panel does not confer membership of Blackstone Chambers; selection criteria and procedures for membership of Chambers are set out in the separate Policy Statement "Recruitment of Pupils and Tenants" which is available on request or published on the Chambers' web site.
6. The names of Academic Research Panel members ("Panellists") will be displayed on the Chambers website. Panellists are permitted to refer to their membership of the Chambers' Academic Research Panel, but should make clear, in any such reference, that they are not members of Chambers and are not available to be directly instructed. This will also be reflected in the entry on Chambers' website.

II. SELECTION CRITERIA

7. The criteria for selection for membership of the Academic Research panel are: (1) whether the Candidate has shown sufficient excellence in a relevant legal field to provide academic research support to Members of Blackstone Chambers and (2) whether the area(s) of law covered is/are area(s) in which Chambers wishes to increase its research support. In assessing this, Chambers will have regard to evidence of the Candidate's abilities and performance in the following categories, assessed objectively, in accordance with the procedures set out below:
 - (1) Intellectual Ability;
 - (2) Strong evidence of Research Skills;
 - (3) Written and Oral Communication Skills;
 - (4) The legal area of expertise of the Candidate;

- (5) The practice needs of Chambers;
 - (6) Flexibility of intention to work on the Panel and work under time pressure.
8. After an initial probationary period of 6 months following appointment as a Panellist, if acceptable to both Chambers and the Panellist, a Panellist will be appointed for an initial term of 2 years, renewable in Chambers' absolute discretion as set out in paragraph 22 below.
 9. The process of considering whether or not to appoint a Panellist, to renew the appointment of a Panellist or to terminate the appointment of a Panellist will be undertaken in the manner set out below.

III. COMPOSITION OF SELECTION COMMITTEE

10. The Chambers Committee shall nominate from time to time Members of Chambers to form the Academic Research Panel Selection Committee ("the Selection Committee") which shall be composed as follows:
 - (1) The Chair shall be a Queen's Counsel;
 - (2) There shall be up to four other members
 - (3) The members shall be selected having regard to the need for maintaining appropriate diversity in accordance with the Handbook and the Guidelines;
 - (4) The Chambers Director and a member of the senior clerking team may also sit on the Selection Committee;
 - (5) Each member of the Selection Committee will be familiar with the BSB Handbook, Guidelines and the Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guide for the Bar and/or will have received classroom based training in fair selection methods.

IV. ADVERTISEMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS

11. Chambers will advertise in appropriate media all vacancies for Panellists in accordance with the Handbook and the Guidelines.
12. Chambers will use a standard application form for applications for Panellists, a copy of which shall be available on Chambers' website or on request from Chambers.
13. Where, in accordance with the procedure set out below, Chambers decides to take up references it will contact the referee and direct the referee as to the relevant selection criterion or criteria being applied and the type of information sought.

V. RECRUITMENT OF PANELLISTS

14. In the event that Chambers receives applications following advertising, the Selection Committee shall determine whether there are any applications which may satisfy the selection criterion for a Panellist. If it concludes that there are, then it will proceed as set out below.

15. The Selection Committee will assess the Candidate by taking references, and if it considers it appropriate, by interviewing the Candidate in a manner which is in accordance with the Handbook.
16. The Selection Committee will prepare a Report stating whether the Candidate(s) meet(s) the selection criteria for Panellists.
17. If, in the view of the Selection Committee, the Candidate(s) meet(s) the selection criteria, then it shall make a recommendation to the Chambers Committee as to the appointment of any candidate to be a Panellist; the decision of the Chambers' Committee to accept or reject that recommendation shall be final.
18. Prior to the end of the probationary period referred to in paragraph 8 above, the Selection Committee shall consider whether or not to recommend the confirmation of the appointment of the Panellist for a 2 year renewable term. The Chambers Committee shall then consider that recommendation and its decision as to whether to confirm or to refuse to confirm the appointment shall be final.
19. In the event that Chambers received an unsolicited application from a Candidate for the Academic Research Panel, such an application shall be referred in the first instance to the Selection Committee. Where the Selection Committee determines that the applicant is a sufficiently outstanding Candidate that it is appropriate to treat the application as an exceptional case, then the Chambers Committee may make such variations to the procedure set out above as it considers appropriate, save that the decision in respect of appointment to the Selection Committee must always be determined by the Chambers' Committee.
20. Chambers will keep a written record of the steps set out above.

VI. MONITORING AND REVIEW

21. Any recruitment of a Panellist shall be subject to the review provisions governing other types of selection in Chambers and as set out in the Chambers Policy Statement for the Recruitment of Pupils, Tenants and Associates.

VII RENEWAL OF AN APPOINTMENT

22. Prior to the expiry of the renewable term identified in paragraph 8 above, or of any term renewed pursuant to this paragraph, the Selection Committee shall consider whether or not to recommend the renewal of the appointment of the Panellist for a further 2 year renewable term at Chambers' unfettered discretion. For that purpose, the Selection Committee may make such enquiries of Members of Chambers, the clerks or the Panellist as are appropriate. The Chambers' Committee shall then consider the recommendation of the Selection Panel and its decision as to whether or not to renew the appointment shall be final.

VIII. TERMINATION OF AN APPOINTMENT

23. A Panellist's appointment may be terminated by the Chambers' Committee for good cause, after consulting the Selection Committee, the Senior Clerk and the Panellist. The Chambers' Committee's decision shall be final.