TEN OLD SQUARE

General pupillage application feedback

We thought it would be useful to offer some general feedback on the written applications we receive, which is what the following paragraphs are intended to do. We can't tell you what information you should include in your form – that's up to you – so the following deals more with application technique, style and structure.

1. Answer the question you are being asked, not the question you want to answer or the question that is easy for you to answer because you can copy and paste from another application form. We will not be fooled by you writing out a subtly different question at the start of your answer!

   We have asked you specific questions so that we can test you against our recruitment criteria. Answering a different question (or only part of the question) means that it's difficult for us to judge the merits of your application against those criteria.

2. Adopt a sensible structure, so that it is easy for the marker to follow what you are saying and see how it links to the question asked. You don't need to restate the question in your answer.

3. Try to keep it concise and clear. We want to know that you can communicate succinctly and in a focused way. For example, we don't need to know every element of a case you have seen/read or an argument you made in an essay. Similarly, don't waste words on points that are irrelevant to the question asked or to our selection criteria.

4. We typically only need a brief description of previous jobs or work-experience (including mini-pupillages), not chapter and verse. When discussing legal work experience, please be careful that you do not breach client confidentiality or data protection laws. If you have changed career, a fuller explanation of your reasoning may be helpful.

5. Write your answers in full, properly constructed sentences and make sure to proofread. Using AI to proofread will find spelling mistakes, but it will not necessarily help you to check that you have answered the question or avoid embarrassing copy and paste slips (like saying that you would be very excited to join another set of Chambers or that you can't wait to practise at the Criminal Bar).

6. When answering questions about whether you meet selection criteria, it will assist those marking the applications if you either: i) gather together the evidence of these criteria from the rest of your application in this answer; or ii) cross-refer to the relevant parts of your application, rather than leaving the marker to do that work for you.

7. Remember who is reading your application. It helps us if you avoid acronyms/technical language that are likely to be outside of our knowledge as lawyers.

8. Remember to set out all of the academic information those marking your information will need. At Ten Old Square, in order for us to mark your application fairly, you need to include at least the following information in your form.

    a. What your A-level or A-level equivalent examination results were. If you took exams other than A-level grades, Scottish Highers, EPQs, Pre-U or the International Baccalaureate, please provide conversions to A-level grades.

    b. The overall class or grade for your undergraduate degree and the overall percentage.

    c. The individual subjects you studied or are studying on your law degree or GDL with, if available, dates and grades.

    d. If available, the individual subjects you studied or are studying at bar school with dates and grades.

    e. Where you set out individual subjects that you have studied, please do so chronologically, rather than by highest to lowest grade, and provide a date.

9. If you want us to take extenuating circumstances into account, we need enough detail about them to do so. We're not asking for your entire history, but a vague allusion to, e.g., an unspecified medical issue or a traumatic event, does not allow us to understand and assess your situation.

10. We want to hear about your achievements; this isn't the time to be shy or modest about what you have done. On the other hand, please don't exaggerate. We may find it hard to believe, for example, that you single-handedly drafted your supervisor's skeleton on a mini-pupillage. We don't say that's impossible, but it's very rarely going to be the case. If you find that saying nice things about yourself makes you uncomfortable, try to imagine that you are writing about someone else.

11. Finally, remember that your application form is the best evidence you can give us at this stage in the recruitment process that you can write well. (Note that, while we permit the use of AI at the application stage, we will be asking you to demonstrate later in the process that you can write without AI). This is also the best place on the application form to show us that you can be persuasive (i.e. that you will be a good advocate).