Blackstone
CHAMBERS

Guidance Notes

AUTUMN 2026

Guidance Notes to Application Form January 2027

Thank you for considering making an application to Blackstone Chambers. These guidance notes provide you with information about the way in which we decide which candidates will be offered an assessed mini-pupillage. The assessed mini-pupillage is one of the key stages in the pupillage application process at Blackstone. These notes are intended to help you to complete your application form in a way which provides us with the information we need and gives you the best possible chance of having an assessed mini-pupillage with us.

Application forms are anonymised and we also use the Gateway's scheme for redacting information. Your application form will be assessed by one or more members of our pupillage committee. Their focus will be on the evidence contained in your application form of your academic achievements; your analytical abilities; your communication and advocacy skills; and your motivation for a career at the Bar, and at Blackstone Chambers in particular.

In addition to the Pupillage Gateway application form, candidates applying to Blackstone Chambers will be asked to complete a timed written assessment, conducted remotely on Saturday 6 February. Applicants will be able to choose from 3 time slots across the day; the Pupillage Committee Chairs will consider requests for alternative times in exceptional circumstances but it is hoped all applicants will complete the assessment on 6 February 2027. It's intended that the assessment will take no longer than three hours. The written assessment will provide the Pupillage Committee with evidence of your analytical ability and written communication skills. which will be considered alongside your application form.

Approximately 80 candidates will be invited to a remote 15 minute first stage interview with two members of our panel, between Thursday 25 February and Thursday 4 March 2027, following which about 40 candidates will be selected for an assessed mini pupillage. If you have previously completed an assessed mini-pupillage at Blackstone Chambers, the pupillage committee will consider any evidence of how your application may have improved, before deciding whether you should be invited to complete another assessed mini-pupillage.

We are looking for candidates of exceptionally high academic ability. We consider past academic performance at degree level to be a good indicator of academic ability and generally require as a minimum that candidates have either obtained a first-class undergraduate degree; or obtained a 2:1 and a distinction (or equivalent) at post graduate level. For these purposes we do not treat the GDL in the same way as a Master's degree or PhD. However, we make exceptions for candidates identified by the Contextual Recruitment System as having significant potential. We also make exceptions for candidates who can demonstrate that there were exceptional circumstances (for example relating to health) which led to their receiving a lower overall grade than they otherwise would have done; and those whose applications

contain other evidence of exceptional academic ability. We do not treat degrees provided by any particular universities, or any particular degree subjects, as being superior to any other. We will also consider applications from candidates with atypical academic backgrounds where there is evidence of outstanding academic ability and aptitude for a career at the bar.

We do not consider A level or GCSE results (except in as much as they are taken into account by the Rare system).

Please make sure that you provide us, on your application form, with your overall degree mark/ grade, as well as the breakdown for individual subjects. If you have a postgraduate degree please tell us what grade you achieved; if is awarded only on a pass/fail basis, please tell us whether you consider that you received the equivalent of a pass/merit/distinction and on what basis you consider that to be the case. If your degree or postgraduate degree is from an overseas university, please tell us what you consider the UK equivalent degree grade to be, and on what basis. If you are in your third year of university working towards an undergraduate degree and would like us to rely on predicted grades, or if you would like us to take into account a predicted grade at post-graduate level, you will need to provide supporting evidence of that predicted grade, such as marks achieved to date, or other evidence from your university.

If you are inviting us to take account of any exceptional circumstances, please explain the effect those circumstances had on your overall grade and provide us with any supporting evidence such as mark transcripts showing that your grades were affected.

Please do provide as much information as you can about your academic achievements. The more evidence we have of high academic achievement, the better your chance of being invited for mini-pupillage. If there is information, other than your degree results, which you consider demonstrates that you have exceptional academic ability please provide us with this information.

Please also consider very carefully the importance of providing contextual information to us and giving your consent for that information to be shared. We use contextual recruitment in order to help us level the playing field and identify potential in candidates from less advantaged backgrounds. So, if you do not provide the contextual information requested and provide consent for it to be shared us, we may not be able to take that information into account in assessing your application.

Our chambers puts great emphasis on high quality written and oral advocacy. Your application form is your opportunity to demonstrate your persuasive written communication skills and tell us about your oral communication. Think carefully about your answers to the questions we

have asked. Make sure that all of your answers are well structured; clear; and persuasive. When telling us what you think demonstrates that you would be a good advocate, examples of advocacy and communication skills might include mooting, representing clients through FRU or legal advice centres, or non-legal such as debating or advocating for a particular cause on behalf of an interest group, or in a work environment. We do not expect applicants to have experience of all of these – we are interested in hearing about examples which demonstrate effective advocacy and communication.

Overall, we are looking for evidence of skills and interests which are relevant to a career as a barrister generally, and to our chambers in particular. We appreciate that not all candidates will have had the same opportunities to gain legal work experience. What we are looking for is evidence of your interest in and aptitude for a career in the law. If there are particular reasons why you have been unable to get legal work experience (such as mini-pupillages) we will consider them when assessing your application so please do tell us about them. We also consider that non-legal experience is important so please do tell us about any work experience, or other relevant experience you have and think carefully about the way in which experience outside the law might be relevant when considering your answers to the questions we have asked. You may, for example, have had to deal with vulnerable people, or difficult customers; you may have advocated on behalf of particular individuals/groups. All of this experience is relevant, in whatever context you have gained it, and we want to hear about it. We are also interested in legal and non-legal experience that you may have arranged, but not yet completed at the time that you apply. Apart from information about your degree results, your application form will be assessed only on the basis of the answers you provide in response to our Chambers questions on the Pupillage Gateway application form. Please therefore make sure that you provide all of the information you can in response to our questions. If you want to cite evidence contained in a different part of the form please refer to it in your response. For example, if you consider that particular work or other experience (e.g. mooting or debating) provides evidence that you will be a good advocate you need to say this and explain why in response to our question about good advocacy. We may refer to what you have said about the particular experience elsewhere in the form but we will not take it into account if you do not explicitly refer to it.

Before completing your application form please carefully consider our selection criteria and Q&A on our website at https://pupillage.blackstonechambers.com, and present your evidence in a way which demonstrates how you satisfy those criteria which we assess by reference to the form.