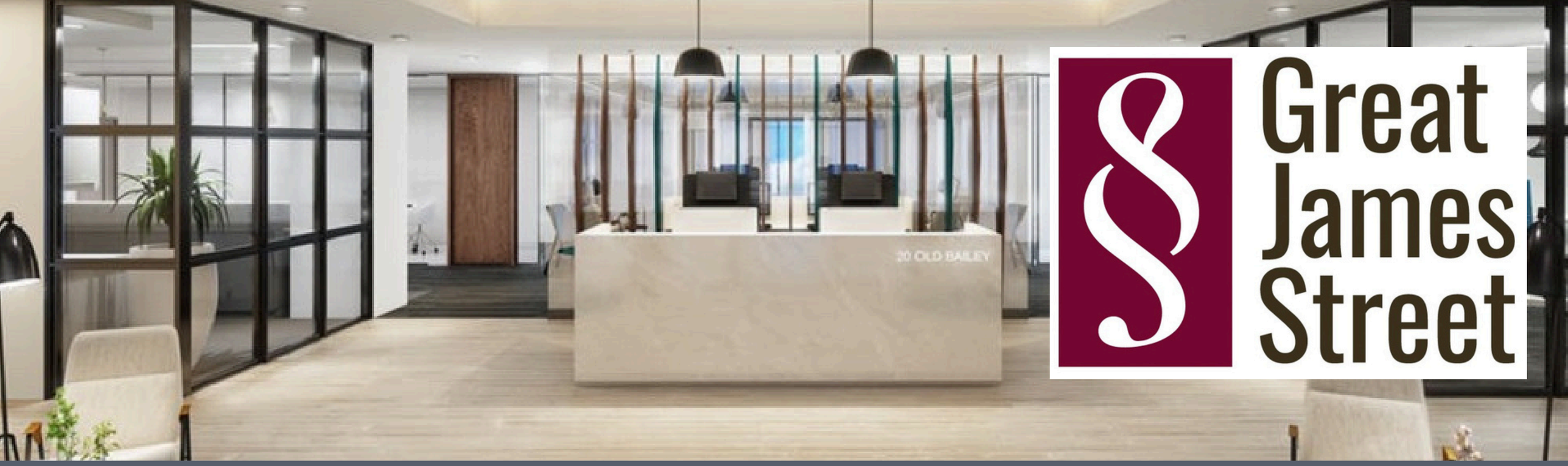

Great James Street

Criminal Law | Extradition | Regulatory Law | Immigration Law | Family Law | Public Law, Judicial Review | Corporate & Financial

PUPILLAGE HANDBOOK

Great James Street Chambers

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Overview

Great James Street Chambers is a specialist, multi-disciplined set of Chambers, with a reputation for excellence and a modern approach. Great James Street Chambers has swiftly become prominent in a crowded market, successfully establishing itself as a leader in our core practice areas and niche areas of law.

Chambers was founded by Head of Chambers, Alun Jones KC and was originally located at 37 Great James Street. In 2020, we embarked on a new venture, becoming one of a few virtual sets of Chambers, embracing the challenges facing the legal profession post Covid-19. In 2020, we appointed Zoe Preston Senior Clerk, a progressive and innovative leader, who continues to develop Chambers' friendly, inclusive ethos with a modern and business minded approach. Excellence is evidenced throughout Chambers from our Members, clerking team and pupils. We recognise that excellence comes from a wide variety of backgrounds, and here diversity is celebrated.

We believe that, with the support of the clerks and colleagues, members, pupils and all of our staff can enjoy a career that allows individuals to develop and progress. We fully support flexible working and have wellbeing at the forefront of all decisions, working with our members to maintain a happy, healthy working environment whilst maximising income.

Our aim is to continue to thrive and grow. We understand that our pupils are key to this and we are committed to providing pupillages that will ensure the success of individuals and Chambers as a collective.

We have a well structured pupillage programme. This guide is intended to give potential and successful applicants an indication as to what pupillage at Great James Street Chambers will involve.

PRACTICE AREAS



CRIMINAL LAW

Great James Street Chambers has a strong criminal team acting for both defence and prosecution, from the Magistrates' Courts to the Crown Court and the Court of Appeal.

Our work includes the full spectrum of criminal law, including the most serious of offences. Members accept private and legally-aided instructions both defending and prosecuting. We advise on criminal law procedures relating to restraint orders, arrest, bail, search warrants and production orders.

Many of our members have developed individual specialisms within criminal law including advising on criminal appeals, international crime, football supporter law, POCA proceedings, knife crime and young offenders, to name a few.

EXTRADITION LAW

Members advise and represent individuals, foreign governments and judicial authorities in extradition proceedings at Westminster Magistrates' Court, the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Members have deep and detailed experience of the practical operation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), Part 2 jurisdictions and special ad hoc requests.

Alun Jones KC is the author of "Jones on Extradition and Mutual Assistance" (Sweet & Maxwell 2001, second edition; first edition 1995.) Co-author "Jones & Doobay on Extradition and Mutual Assistance" (Sweet & Maxwell 2004; third edition). The next edition is being written currently with the assistance of a team from Chambers.

We have developed a strong extradition team, led by Alun Jones KC and other senior members of Chambers with vast experience in this field.

IMMIGRATION LAW

Our experienced team advise and represent clients in all aspects of immigration law: asylum and international protection; British nationality; children; deportation detention; deportation; entry clearance; family immigration and human rights; immigration appeals; points-based system applications; settlement; trafficking; urgent injunctions and removals; and visit visas.

We are frequently instructed in judicial review applications made to the Upper Tribunal and High Court, in the Court of Appeal, in cases of unlawful detention, certification under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 s.94 and s.96, refusals to accept fresh claims under the Immigration Rules paragraph 353 and Citizen Rights Appeals.

PUBLIC LAW, JUDICIAL REVIEW & REGULATORY

Members have extensive expertise in all aspects of public law, especially in relation to extradition, immigration and crime. We have developed this practice to include prison law, education, local government, planning, mental health, professional discipline and data protection and privacy.

This broad experience involves advice and representation in judicial review and tribunal proceedings, and before professional disciplinary bodies.

Members represent corporate and individual clients facing proceedings brought by regulators including the General Medical Council (GMC, (Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the General Dental Council (GDC), Royal College of Nursing (RCN), General Pharmaceutical Council (GPHC), Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the Metropolitan Police and local authorities.

Members are instructed to advise and represent at every stage of proceedings and are also instructed as Chair and legal advisors in proceedings.

OTHER AREAS OF PRACTICE

In addition to our core areas of practice, we have members practicing in other areas of law on a regular basis, including but not limited to family law, employment law, prison law, parole board hearings, actions against the police, licensing, mutual legal assistance, asset recovery, freezing orders, injunctions, energy law, inquiries, inquests, arbitration and mediation.

All members and pupils are encouraged to develop their practices in line with their personal preferences and interests and we never discourage our members from exploring opportunities.



PUPILLAGE EXPERIENCE AT GREAT JAMES STREET CHAMBERS

The number of pupillages to be offered annually shall be dependent on the finances and goals of Chambers. At present, it is hoped that at least one pupillage will be offered each year to organically grow Chambers and maintain a strong junior end. In 2020, we offered two pupillages, with both pupils offered full tenancy after successful completion of their pupillages. In 2021, our application process was delayed due to Covid-19, but we managed to obtain a waiver from the BSB to advertise at the end of 2021. We offered 1 pupillage, starting in December of 2021 and he was subsequently offered full membership in 2022. In 2023 we offered 2 pupillages, starting in October, one pupil was offered full membership in 2024 and the other offered provisional membership upon completion of their pupillages. In 2025, we offered 1 pupillage, who was offered full membership and we have 1 current pupil in 2026.

APPLICATION STAGE

Great James Street Chambers has a diverse Pupillage Committee, representative of a cross section of our membership. There are currently seven committee members headed by Kevin Metzger, a further two senior juniors, five junior members of Chambers and our Senior Clerk.

Applications should be submitted via the Pupillage Gateway.

Applications are assessed for evidence of commitment to and aptitude for a career at the Bar and intellectual ability. Applications are reviewed and marked by two or three assessors, with all scores accumulated by the Head of Pupillage. Successful candidates will be invited to progress to interview. Unsuccessful candidates will be notified by email and feedback is provided on request.

Criteria: Degree classification; Bar Course classification; commitment to/why the criminal Bar; commitment to/why GJS; Work experience.
Essay questions: 1 Answer misses the point of the question entirely/wholly inadequate for question posed; 2. Poor/incomplete answer that nonetheless contains good points; 3. Adequate answer that hits the key points but goes no further; 4. Strong answer that goes beyond the basic requirements of the question; 5. Excellent answer that is demonstrates significant insight and interest in legal concepts.

INTERVIEW STAGE

The interview process is conducted by the Pupillage Committee. The interview is designed to give the committee an opportunity to assess each applicant and to get to know candidates individually.

Interviews take place at our Chambers, 20 Old Bailey, in a large conference room or at an alternative suitable venue.

Candidates are provided with a criminal legal scenario 15 minutes prior to the start of their interview, with a list of questions to explore. We are understanding that some candidates may not yet have started or completed the Bar course and we do not seek to disadvantage those applicants. The scenario forms an opportunity for the applicant to show thought process, intellectual reasoning and justify opinions.

Each member of the committee scores interviewees individually based on a pre-set criteria. A meeting is arranged following conclusion of interviews for the committee to make a decision. In the event of no unanimous decision, a vote will be advised and a majority decision will be agreed upon. A reserve may be agreed in the event that the successful candidate does not accept the offer of pupillage. We may decide to invite applicants for a second round of interviews should we require.

The successful candidate will be offered pupillage by email in accordance with the Gateway timetable. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified at the earliest opportunity, no more than 10 working days post interview, by email. Feedback will be provided upon request. We will aim to respond to requests within 14 days.

The offer of pupillage will contain the date of commencement, details of supervision arrangements, details of the award to be made to the pupil, a copy of the Pupillage Policy and such other information.

Interview Criteria: Ability to communicate/present persuasive argument; Ability identify essential issues; Resilience/ determination/independence of mind; Interpersonal skills/teamwork.

COMMENCEMENT OF PUPILLAGE

In the first six months, pupils will have an opportunity to undertake work in a variety of practice areas with their pupil supervisors and other members of Chambers. In the second six months, whilst the majority of work undertaken will be criminal law, pupils will also undertake work in other practice areas including extradition, immigration, family, regulatory and other areas of Chambers' specialisms, should they wish to explore these areas.

As a virtual set, pupils will be expected to work remotely but with access to facilities at our Chambers located at 20 Old Bailey during working hours. Pupils are expected to travel to and from court on a daily basis. Pupil supervisors, clerks and members of Chambers are available at any time should pupils require any additional support or guidance. Great James Street Chambers are proud of our collegiate work environment and utilise modern platforms such as Teams, Whatsapp, Linkedin, Facebook, Twitter and other platforms to maintain fantastic communication links between members. We regularly meet for social and marketing events.

Chambers will offer a pupillage award of £45,000. This consists of £3750 per month for the first 6 months of pupillage (a total of £22,500) and guaranteed minimum received earnings of £3750 per month in the second 6 months. We are pleased to report that pupils who completed their second six in Chambers in previous years significantly exceeded the guaranteed minimum received earnings during their second six and developed thriving practices which have continued in to their tenancy.

Pupils are not required to pay Chambers’ commission on any fees received during their pupillage. As a full member of Chambers, commission is applied at 14.5% of received earnings.

PUPIL SUPERVISORS

It is Chambers' policy to assign each pupil a supervisor who has overall responsibility for the pupil throughout pupillage.

Pupil supervisors will provide each pupil with a suitable training programme that enables the pupil to meet the competencies in the Professional Statement to the required standard, and will provide all necessary assistance in complying with the pupil's regulatory obligations.

Pupil supervisors will provide informal, ongoing feedback throughout the pupillage and we hope will build a strong rapport between pupil and supervisors. Pupil supervisors will conduct formal appraisal meetings with the pupils; the objective of these appraisals is to ensure that the pupil is equipped to meet the standard required for a Provisional Practising Certificate at the end of the first-six, and to complete pupillage. At the conclusion of pupillage, the pupil supervisors will conduct a final appraisal and report to the Management Committee with their recommendations for full membership.

TRAINING

In addition to the traditional shadowing method of training expected within pupillage, Chambers offers our pupils regular advocacy exercises involving other members of Chambers, pupil supervisors, the Senior Clerk and members of the Management Committee.

These exercises usually involve legal scenarios to prepare and present either in person or virtually. Constructive feedback is provided. Pupil supervisors will use these exercises to assess competencies.

Pupils will be shadowed at court in their second six by their pupil supervisors and Senior Clerk. Constructive feedback is provided. Pupil supervisors will use information from the shadowing experience to assess competency.

The pupil will be required to undertake and satisfactorily complete all compulsory courses and assessments prescribed by the BSB as applicable to their pupillage, including the BSB-approved advocacy course during the non-practising period and the Professional Ethics assessment, subject to any exemption granted by the BSB

FULL MEMBERSHIP

At the conclusion of pupillage, pupil supervisors will conduct a final appraisal and report to the Management Committee with their recommendations for full membership. Successful candidates will be invited to apply for full membership. An interview will take place either in person at 20 Old Bailey or virtually, at the discretion of the Management Committee.

The interview will be conducted by the Pupillage Committee with pupil supervisors in attendance.

Successful applicants will be offered full membership to Chambers upon agreement to Chambers' constitution, a copy of which will be provided to all applicants in advance.

Chambers views pupillage as an investment in our future and we strive to provide the necessary tools for our pupils to develop their own practices, to learn skills required as an independent member of the Bar and to integrate themselves in a well established, friendly set of Chambers.

We are extremely proud of our successful pupillage programme which continues to allow us to develop and grow as a Chambers, whilst offering individuals the opportunity to mould and grow their own practices with the full support of colleagues and clerks.

We have received excellent feedback from previous pupils and work closely with them to develop and improve future programmes.

VISHAL MISRA



CALL: 2010

PRACTICE AREAS: CRIME, IMMIGRATION, REGULATORY AND EXTRADITION

PUPILLAGE UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2020 AND MAY 2021

I undertook a reduced 8-month pupillage at Great James Street Chambers. My pupillage comprised a 4-month non-practising period between 28 September 2020 and 27 January 2021 and a 4-month practising period between 28 January 2021 and 28 May 2021.

Despite the challenges of working around the pandemic and transitioning to an online only model, I was shadowing in court almost daily. This exposure did much to boost my confidence. Alongside this, the breadth of exposure was very well thought out. The model that Chambers took in structuring the non-practising period of pupillage was also much appreciated. Rather than shadowing the most senior members of Chambers as a matter of routine, regular opportunities to shadow junior members of Chambers demonstrated the realities of a career at the Bar very effectively. The balance of work between prosecution and defence work allowed me to develop a much greater insight into trial strategy.

I was extremely well supported through the transition to practising. I was given my first trial within a matter of weeks. The confidence demonstrated in me by the clerks and my pupil supervisors helped me build my own confidence. Members of Chambers have remained an invaluable source of support

and advice. In particular the friendly cooperative nature of the junior members of Chambers is demonstrative of the working environment at Chambers. Whenever I've had any problems, there has always been a member willing to help.

My practising period was extremely busy, and I was in court on an almost daily basis. Chambers clearly has the infrastructure and ability to attract a large volume of work. This has helped in swiftly building a viable and rewarding practice overall.

POPPY CLEARY



CALL: 2022

PRACTICE AREAS: CRIME

PUPILLAGE UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN OCTOBER 2023 AND OCTOBER 2024

I undertook a full 12 month pupillage at Great James Street between October 2023 and October 2024, comprising of a traditional First Six and a Second Six where I was then ‘on my feet’.

Throughout First Six, I spent my day-to-day shadowing many different members of Chambers at court. This enabled me to experience a variety of areas of law and different types of hearings. Perhaps most importantly, it meant I got to build good working relationships, and friendships, with my colleagues from day one. Members of Chambers have always made time to explain their work, give me opportunities to ask questions, and practice oral and written advocacy. A particular highlight was doing internal advocacy sessions in Court No 2 at the Old Bailey.

From the start of pupillage, my supervisor and clerks have welcomed my opinion on how I hope to develop my practice, which areas of law I am interested in and those which I have tried but decided aren’t for me! I learnt an incredible amount in First Six, which meant I felt calm and confident going into Second Six and having the responsibility of my own cases and clients.

After beginning my practice in the Magistrates Court, the clerks swiftly secured Crown Court work for me, including trials. As pupillage drew to an end my practice predominantly consisted of Crown Court work, both prosecuting and defending.

The environment at Great James Street is so friendly that I know I could call on any of my colleagues for assistance. I chose Great James Street because I felt it was a Chambers where I would be supported, encouraged and embraced, and my observations were completely correct.

LUCY CURRAN



CALL: 2025

PRACTICE AREAS: CRIMINAL AND REGULATORY LAW

PUPILLAGE UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2025 AND SEPTEMBER 2026

My pupillage at Great James Street Chambers, from September 2025 to September 2026, has been an excellent and incredibly rewarding experience. From the outset, I felt welcomed and well supported by members of Chambers and the clerking team. There has always been someone available to offer advice or guidance, and any issues that arose during the year were dealt with swiftly, professionally and with genuine care.

During my first six, I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to observe a wide variety of hearings and cases. This gave me an invaluable insight into life at the Bar and allowed me to develop a much better understanding of court procedure, advocacy and professional etiquette before beginning to take on my own cases. I was encouraged to ask questions and learn from different members of Chambers, which helped to make the transition into my second six feel far less daunting.

My second six gave me the opportunity to develop my own practice and build confidence as an advocate, while still having the reassurance of a strong support network around me. The clerks were extremely supportive as I found my feet, and I always felt able to approach colleagues for guidance when I needed it. As the six progressed, I became increasingly confident in managing my own cases, clients and court appearances, whilst knowing that support remained readily available.

I have also been extremely fortunate to have Alison Gurden as my pupil supervisor. We have built a fantastic relationship over the course of the year, and her support, guidance and encouragement have been invaluable to my development. She has given me the confidence and space to develop my own style as an advocate whilst always being available when I have needed advice.

Overall, my pupillage at Great James Street Chambers has given me an excellent foundation on which to begin my career at the Bar. I have felt genuinely supported throughout the entire process and have been made to feel part of Chambers from the very beginning. It has been a challenging but hugely enjoyable year, and one that has left me feeling confident and well prepared for the next stage of my career.