

MENTORS

WHAT DO MENTORS DO?

Mentors are more senior members of the legal profession who can help you with various things, depending on the point you are at in your career. When you are a student, mentors can give you advice on what sorts of things you should be doing that will help you when you want to start applying for pupillage. For example, they might recommend you try to obtain more mini-pupillages, or take part in mooting competitions.

Prior to obtaining pupillage, mentors can help by reading over your pupillage applications and giving you advice on how to improve them. They can also give you advice on how to approach and prepare for pupillage interviews.

Once you have obtained pupillage, a mentor will be another person who you can go to for advice. If you have any queries regarding your workload, practical matters such as what to wear or how to act, or if there is something you are worried about within chambers, you can speak to your mentor. Whilst you will often have people within your chambers who you can speak to, occasionally you may want to confide in someone independent from your chambers.

Mentors are not able to give with mini-pupillages, work experience or pupillage, although they may well have advice on how to apply for these things.

WHEN AND HOW SHOULD I APPLY FOR A MENTOR?

Most people think about getting a mentor when they are preparing to start the Bar Course and plan to apply for pupillage. Each of the Inns of Court provide a scheme however they have slightly different requirements for you to be given a mentor. You have to apply for a mentor from the Inn that you are a member of.

Gray's Inn allow applications from students in their second year of studying a law degree, all the way through to being called. The only requirement is that you are seeking pupillage. The Inn will try to match you with a barrister in your region who is practising in the area of law in which you are interested.

Lincoln's Inn and Inner Temple require you to have secured a place on the Bar Course prior to applying for a mentor. If you are applying for pupillage before you obtain a place on the Bar Course, then an Inner Temple/ Lincoln's Inn mentor will be unable to help you with your applications.

Middle Temple's mentoring scheme supports members of the Bar from tenancy onwards throughout their career. Therefore, you cannot apply as a student. However, Middle Temple does have another scheme open to students called 'Sponsorship'. A 'sponsor' is a practising barrister who will be able to provide guidance on activities to improve your CV and areas of practice at the Bar. You must be a student member of the Inn to apply for a sponsor.

With all the schemes you will be asked to rank the areas of practise in order of preference. Whilst the Inns will try their best to match you with a mentor who practises in your region in your preferred area of law, it will ultimately come down to availability. You may get given a mentor who does not practise in your area of law, and you may not be given a mentor at all. Therefore, when you reach the point where you are eligible to apply and think you will benefit from a mentor, it is advisable to apply sooner rather than later.

There are also other organisations which offer mentoring schemes, the Young Legal Aid Lawyers offer mentoring to law students who wish to embark on a career in criminal law. Women in Criminal Law (WICL) similarly offer mentoring opportunities to women wanting to embark on a career in criminal law. You can apply for a mentor as a student, or as a junior member of the profession. The only requirement for a WICL mentor is that you are a member of the organisation.

USEFUL LINKS

The Inns mentoring schemes:

Inner Temple

<https://www.innertemple.org.uk/education/bar-course-bptc-students/student-schemes/>

Middle Temple

<https://www.middletemple.org.uk/members/inn-initiatives-and-events/mentoring-scheme>

Gray's Inn

<https://www.graysinn.org.uk/education/students/career-services/mentoring-scheme>

Lincoln's Inn

<https://www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/student-members/marshalling-and-mentoring/>

Other mentoring schemes:



Young Legal Aid Lawyers

<http://www.younglegalaidlawyers.org/mentoring>

Women in Criminal Law

<https://www.womenincriminallaw.com/mentoring>