




Pupillage at Fountain Court



“Fountain Court is a titan of the Commercial Bar, navigating ‘some of the highest-end, most cutting-edge cases’ out there.”

Fountain Court pupillage review, Chambers Student 2023



Fountain Court is a leading set of international commercial barristers, based in London and Singapore.

Our Expertise

We work on some of the most significant commercial and regulatory cases.

Our People

Our supportive and inclusive culture is fundamental to our success.

Our Chambers

Our first-class barristers are supported by an exceptional clerking team.



Introduction to Pupillage

Pupillage is the work-based training which forms part of qualifying to become a barrister. Fountain Court aims to take around four pupils for 12 months each year and is committed to taking on all successful pupils as tenants after evaluation. We want to secure the best people, regardless of background, race, gender or anything else.

We have a friendly, progressive and modern outlook.

Pupillage here is an opportunity to work with some of the brightest advocates in London and be a part of precedent-setting cases. We mentor and support pupils by offering tailored training so they gain experience from more senior members. Pupillage is divided into four seats of three months' duration and pupils are not assessed during the first two months to allow them time to settle in. The first and last three months are spent with the

same pupil supervisor, who has overall responsibility for the pupil's training. The middle six months are spent with two different pupil supervisors to allow exposure to more members.

During pupillage, we feel there are enough pressures on pupils and we don't want to add to that unnecessarily. Therefore, our pupils are not required to undertake any competitive advocacy exercises against one another, nor are they set the same pieces of assessed work; instead, we evaluate each person individually, based on merit. All work undertaken during pupillage is relevant to the practice of a member of chambers and is live work. Pupils are encouraged to cooperate with each other, with a view to this supportive ethos being carried on through tenancy.

Why Fountain Court?

Exposure to the most stimulating work

Fountain Court gives pupils the opportunity to be a part of precedent-setting commercial cases. Pupils gain experience and work with members across all levels of seniority. Recent new tenants have worked on Supreme Court cases and some of the heaviest commercial litigation at the Bar.

Working with the brightest advocates

Pupillage at Fountain Court is an opportunity to work with some of the brightest and most successful advocates in London. We mentor and support pupils by offering tailored training during pupillage. This approach has a formative effect and one that is demonstrated in our successes in court.

First rate staffing support

Our clerks are recognised as some of the finest and most responsive at the Bar. Our administration and clerking teams are always on hand to assist members and clients. As a leading set, we believe in providing the best possible quality of service all round.

An inclusive and supportive culture

We have a friendly, progressive and modern outlook. We compete for the top talent to secure a successful future for our chambers and clients. We want the best people to join us, regardless of background, race, gender or sexual orientation.

Pupils are not in competition with one another

We evaluate each pupil individually based on their own merit and all pupils who meet the relevant standard will be offered tenancy.





Life as a pupil

Pupils are warmly welcomed by members and staff and are encouraged to take an active role in cases from the start of their time with us, enabling them to work with some of the leading barristers at the Commercial Bar and on some of the most interesting cases.

Our pupils accompany members of chambers to trials, appeals and interlocutory hearings. They assist members by reading papers and preparing pleadings, skeleton arguments, advices and notes on specific questions of law. The work is reviewed, and members of chambers are always happy to discuss the work with the pupil.

Our training programme is designed to prepare our pupils for starting in practice as a junior commercial barrister. We are happy to arrange for pupils to experience areas of work that are of particular interest to them during their pupillage year.

We believe it is important for pupils to learn during their pupillage year and therefore encourage paid advocacy work to be accepted only once the tenancy decision is made.

Remuneration

Each pupil will receive a total of £90,000, in the form of a first six-month award of £55,000, and a second six-month award of £35,000. The awards are payable monthly in advance during pupillage. The pupillage year runs from October to September.

Pre-pupillage support

Fountain Court is able to make an advance of up to £25,000 of the pupillage award for the vocational course year.

Life as a new tenant

We will make offers of tenancy to all pupils who meet the relevant standard, during their pupillage. Offers of tenancy are generally made in June or July of each year.

Junior tenants undertake a mixture of led work (working together on a case with a more senior barrister, often also from Fountain Court) and unled work (where the junior tenant is the only barrister on the case).

This means that a junior tenant's caseload is very diverse as they are likely to be working on very significant commercial litigation at the same time as handling much smaller, discrete matters on their own.

It is a distinguishing feature of life as a junior tenant (as opposed to, say, a newly qualified solicitor) that the

individual barrister has both a great deal of responsibility from a very early stage and the ability to manage their workload and practice in line with their own commitments and preferences.

There are no set working hours, no fixed holiday limits and it is often possible to work from home – all of which gives a junior tenant a flexibility in their working life which is seldom found in the early stages of other professional roles.

Whilst our junior tenants work hard, and their clients will expect them to produce work of the highest standard, this work is carried out within an environment which is friendly and supportive.

Financial Support

At Fountain Court, we offer loans to new tenants to ensure that they receive an income at least equal to the amount of their pupillage award during their first year of tenancy. However, our experience is that new tenants have comfortably earned more than their pupillage award in their first year.

New tenants are not required to share the expenses of chambers administration. Contributions are proportionate to income, so the senior members of chambers pay the greater part of the costs. During their first year of practice, tenants may be asked to undertake a modest amount of pro bono legal work instead, for voluntary or charitable organisations.

Practice Development

We operate a mentoring scheme for junior tenants in the early years of practice whereby they are designated a more senior member of chambers who meets with them regularly to discuss how their practice is developing and raise, in confidence, any concerns that they may have.

Fountain Court operates a clerking system in which members are grouped by seniority, ensuring that each of the clerks has extensive knowledge of the diverse practices of the barristers they work with and can provide bespoke clerking and practice management. All clerks communicate with their team of barristers daily and host frequent structured meetings with individual members, with the specific purpose of developing their practice. For the junior tenants in particular, this bespoke practice management service includes obtaining small advocacy work.

Social Mobility

We are conscious of long-held perceptions of the commercial Bar as being only for those from affluent or privileged backgrounds. We are striving to change those perceptions and to address any structural issues which may be discouraging individuals from less privileged backgrounds from considering the Bar as a career.

We therefore support and participate in a number of initiatives which aim to address these issues such as a

mentoring scheme founded by a number of commercial sets (including Fountain Court), Bridging the Bar and the Combar Scholarship scheme, to name a few.

The backgrounds of our members shows that there is no single route to the Bar and a significant proportion of them were educated at state schools.

More information can be found on our website.





Mini-Pupillage

It is a requirement that all applicants applying for a pupillage at Fountain Court must complete a two-day mini-pupillage, including an assessed piece of work, prior to submitting their application.

What is a mini-pupillage?

A mini-pupillage is an opportunity for those who want to pursue a career at the Commercial Bar to spend some time at Fountain Court to meet some of our members and gain an introduction to the type of work we do. It also forms a key part of the application for pupillage.

Selecting mini pupils

We have developed procedures for selecting mini-pupils which are fair and do not discriminate against any applicant. We positively encourage mini-pupillage applications from groups who are currently underrepresented in Chambers. We would be grateful if applicants would also complete and return the diversity questions at the end of the application form. This information is used for monitoring purposes only and is not considered as part of a candidate's application.

How to apply to Fountain Court

Mini Pupillage

How do I apply?

Applications for a mini-pupillage should be made using the form available on the Fountain Court website.

When do I apply?

We require you to complete a mini-pupillage before applying for a pupillage and you therefore need to allow enough time to complete a mini-pupillage before the Pupillage Gateway opens in early February.

We require our mini-pupils to have commenced legal study before undertaking a mini-pupillage.

At Fountain Court we have three mini-pupillage intakes: Winter and Summer; the deadlines for applying for each are detailed on our website.

Pupillage

How do I apply?

Applications should be made through the Pupillage Gateway, a central clearing house for pupillage applications. The scheme requires applicants to complete a single standard application form listing their choice of chambers for pupillage.

When do I apply?

We recruit 18 months in advance of a candidate's pupillage commencing so you should think about applying for a pupillage at least two to three years before you wish to start.

If you have not completed a mini-pupillage your application for pupillage will be treated as an application for a mini-pupillage in the first instance, although there will inevitably be a very limited number of mini-pupillages available in such circumstances.

Selection Criteria

The criteria by which we select our pupils are:

1

Academic and intellectual ability.

2

Advocacy and communication skills; clarity of expression, ability to think and respond under pressure, and potential capacity as an advocate.

3

Potential to be a successful self-employed practitioner at the Commercial Bar, including: interest in and understanding of the type of work done by Chambers; potential ability to work well with members of Chambers, solicitors, clients, staff and other pupils; overcoming adversity, resilience and drive; and integrity.



“Colleagues are also said to be incredibly supportive of one another beyond pupillage. ‘There is a great supportive environment within the set, especially among the junior end,’ one insider tells us.”

Legal Cheek





Fountain Court

LONDON

Fountain Court Chambers
Temple
London
EC4Y 9DH

+44 (0)20 7583 3335

SINGAPORE

Fountain Court Chambers
10 Collyer Quay
Ocean Financial Centre #40-38
Singapore 049315

+ 65 6808 6611