



## VIRTUAL OPEN DAY 2021

### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

*The 1CL Virtual Open Day was held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021, with questions being answered by the speakers – Paul Stagg, Ella Davis, Henk Soede and Clark Chessis.*

#### **PUPILLAGE:**

**Will you take into consideration that, over the course of the pandemic, it has been harder to obtain Mini Pupillages, when looking at Pupillage Applications?**

Yes, and of course that will be the same for everyone. The trick will be showing what you have done to try to overcome that challenge - e.g. attending events like this!

**With the competency questions, will short bullet-pointed style sentences suffice or do you prefer full and flowery paragraphs?**

I think that's a question of personal style. I would always advise against "flowery" prose. The key is concision and clarity.

**Top tips for drafting the application form? What structure do you like to see?**

Our application form, for the most part, seeks information rather than free-flowing answers. The exceptions are the questions about why you want to join chambers and what you hope to gain, and your answers to our competency questions. We look for answers that are punchy (the word limits are short) and show an ability to set out the relevant information clearly and concisely.

**As someone whose legal experience/education is mostly based in the North, on a pupillage application should I explicitly say how committed I am to moving to, and practising in London, or is it a given?**

We have colleagues from all over the UK in chambers! There is no harm in emphasising your desire to move to and practice in London but there is nowhere particular on our application form where you would give that information. We would tend to assume that any candidate will come to London to practice.

**Due to Covid, courts have not been willing to offer judge-marshalling or mini-pupillages and they are still not really taking them into consideration due to Covid rules and procedures. Will that be taken into consideration by yourself within the application?**

Yes. If there are particularly circumstances which mean that you haven't been able to do mini-pupillages or marshalling, then we will take that into account, whether those are general or specific issues.

**How many rounds of interviews do you have?**

Just one. We usually interview 10 to 12 candidates in a single day.

**Will pupillage necessarily take place for 5 days a week in person, or might there be the possibility of a hybrid situation (part home working, part in person)?**

We will consider this, particularly for a pupil with disabilities, but a large part of pupillage consists of absorbing and learning from personal attendance from your pupil supervisor and others, so we will need to ensure that arrangements are appropriate to give you the best chance to learn the trade properly.

**Is it favourable to have a mini pupillage with 1CL prior to applying for pupillage?**

Mini-pupillage forms no part of our pupillage application process. There is no need to have done a mini-pupillage with us, but of course it might be helpful in explaining why you want to join us.

**Does the interview panel have access to a candidate's university?**

No, that information is removed from the application before being passed to the selection panel.

**Are grades not a factor for determining aptitude? Why are they excluded?**

Grades are not excluded, and we obviously do give weight to academic excellence. It is the educational institutions attended which are not identified. This is in accordance with the Bar Council's Fair Recruitment Guidance.

**In terms of the academics, is there a sift at the start of the application form which eliminates some candidates, or is the whole application form marked including marks for this section and then the highest marks put through?**

You score points for your academic achievement, but we have no minimum threshold (e.g. you don't need to have a first or 2:1). Your points are added to your points under other sections and, by way of example, you get 56 points under the competency questions and 11 points if you have a first class degree.

**Do you allow pupils to draw down some of their award prior to commencing pupillage?**

This is something that we are prepared to consider.

**Do you encourage career changers who are keen to take advantage of their previous careers (in my case Financial Crime Compliance)? Do you have any recent examples amongst junior tenants?**

Yes. We have a few junior tenants who have continued to do work for the Financial Conduct Authority, where they did some secondment. Obviously, contacts from your former careers may assist in generating work, and we will try to help you utilise those.

**When do you plan to open your pupillage application window?**

The adverts go live on the Gateway on November 18th. We may not get an advert out on that date, but we will aim to do so in the following week, depending on circumstances.

**Just wondering how many applications you get for pupillage compared to how many get invited to interviews?**

Last time we had 98 applications, despite the fact that we advertised later than we had intended. We would have interviewed 10-12 candidates, but sadly we had to abort the process.

**Do you take account of postgraduate law marks?**

Yes. Under the scheme for 2022 we gave 3 marks out of 100 for post-graduate study, including PGDL and BPTC.

**What advice does the panel have for forming relationships with solicitors during pupillage / first few years of practice?**

Clark has given much useful advice. Try to be as helpful as possible, try to be accessible and friendly. Try to take opportunities for networking and promotion. Adhere to your promises about dates for paperwork etc.

**How many pupillage applications do you receive each year?**

Historically it has been 100-200.

**Will chambers consider an Oct 22 start for pupil in forthcoming round?**

Not unless the individual had a BSB dispensation from having to apply in accordance with the Gateway, which has already closed for October 2022.

**How do you manage a relationship with a regularly instructing solicitor if you refuse to take a case on a CFA? Will they instruct you again or is it part of the process?**

It depends. Obviously if you never take them, you will not be offered them. Most of the firms we work with will exercise some quality control and will also understand that unlike their firms, counsel doing cases on CFA are taking a personal risk. If you ever feel under undue pressure from a solicitor to accept a CFA case, you should seek support from a senior colleague or your clerks. Our clerks' room is used to dealing with such issues smoothly.

Hi. I whole-heartedly endorse Paul's comments. What does matter is the need to make the decision in good time particularly if there is a hearing date looming. We always ask for papers to be delivered in good time to enable you to make a quick decision. What is not acceptable is having the papers for 7 or 10 days and then deciding a day or two before trial that you will not take the case on a CFA as that will leave the solicitors very little time to make alternative arrangements.

**What are the typical hours of work for a pupil? I appreciate it may vary depending on the complexity of certain cases but it will be helpful to get a guide of the work/life balance at Chambers**

Pupils would normally be in Chambers 9-6. Very occasionally work outside those hours may be necessary, and travel to court will involve longer days. But weekend/evening work should not be the norm in pupillage.

**Is the fact that I am a third year law student (haven't completed the LLB) a disadvantage when applying for pupillage with you?**

Under the current marking scheme, which may be changed for 2023-24, marks for the degree course are given on the basis of results to date and final grades predicted (11 for 1st, 8 for 2:1, 5 for 2:2, 2 for lower grades). So you shouldn't be disadvantaged in relation to that. We do award up to 3 marks for post-grad study for which you wouldn't qualify, so there is minor disadvantage in that respect.

**Apart from legal work experience, what other extracurricular activities make you stand out when applying to 1CL for pupillage?**

Under our current marking scheme, more general work experience will be of interest (e.g. if you have worked in a sector which may be relevant - for example, in medicine or healthcare, or in insurance). We will also be interested to read about obstacles and adverse experiences that you have overcome.

**What are the red flag signs in a pupillage application form?**

Applicants who obviously haven't taken the time to read and understand the question being asked is a bad sign - the ability to quickly read and understand what information is being sought is an essential skill of a barrister.

**Do GDL students have the same opportunities as law graduates?**

Yes. Our application system is designed not to favour GDL students over law graduates.

**What opportunities do incoming pupils have to network with members of Chambers before pupillage begins?**

We don't arrange anything specific but we will be happy to arrange for a visit to chambers to orientate you before pupillage begins. It is an interesting idea which we will take on board as a possibility for adopting as a general practice.

**Would experience as a paralegal be useful even if the area of law is not directly relevant?**

Yes. The key is showing why it is relevant - e.g. client skills, understanding of the CPR/litigation process etc.

**How do you pick your practice area? Do you try different ones during pupillage and then choose or do you apply before pupillage?**

Often it picks you. You will get the opportunity to experience a range of them in pupillage. You will then find

what interests you. A lot will also depend on the relationships you then form with solicitors. You might find yourself popular with solicitors in a particular practice area.

**Is there a rush to apply for pupillage? I have almost finished my law conversion and I am unsure if it is ok working in another area for a few years before starting a bar course.**

It can often be good to take a year or two out to do other things - with the levels of student debt these days it may be a necessity for some. You do need to be prepared to justify your decision, because we, in common with all chambers, will be looking for those candidates who are committed to the Bar.

**Hello, I am a practicing and qualified Civil Commercial Workplace mediator - will I be able to continue this work alongside pupillage?**

We do look for our pupils to commit themselves full-time to their pupillage - subject to any reasonable adjustments required for disabilities - because it is an intense year. So we would discourage any outside employment - and we try to provide an award which is sufficient to enable candidates not to need to work outside their training.

**What about taking on ADR work that may come through the chambers?**

If you are instructed to do that type of work through chambers, that is not a problem, it will be treated like any other instructions.

**Do you accept pupillage applications from applicants who have a dispensation from the BSB outside of the normal gateway timelines? Or should they apply in the ordinary way?**

We will consider such applicants provided that the BSB has given a dispensation for their applications to be considered outside the gateway timetable.

**Do you accept applications from Transferring Qualified lawyers with pupillage exemption/reduction granted by the BSB?**

Yes, we will consider them. Our new pupil mentioned earlier benefitted from such an exemption.

**Is there a bar on applying if you were called to the bar just over 5 years ago but still working in law and in the main practice areas of 1CL?**

The BSB has power to grant dispensations in many cases. See the relevant page on its website here:

<https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/barrister-training-waivers-and-exemptions.html>

**Mr Stagg just mentioned 'A six month accelerated pupillage specially authorised by the BSB'. How can one have this accelerated pupillage authorised by the BSB? And did he/she go through the same pupillage application process?**

The BSB can authorise such pupillages, usually for those who have extensive experience in law, either here or abroad. See the BSB page here: <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/training-qualification/barrister-training-waivers-and-exemptions.html> In the case of the candidate in question, the BSB had authorised the offering of a pupillage outside the usual timetable, so he was not required to go through the same process.

**Does the same Pupillage process apply to those who obtained a partial exemption from the BSB for Pupillage?**

It depends whether the BSB has given an exemption from the need to apply through the Gateway timetable.

**Do you accept pupillage applications from applicants who have an exemption/6 month dispensation from the BSB outside of the normal gateway timetable? Or should they apply in the ordinary way through the gateway?**

It depends if the BSB has also granted a dispensation for the candidate to apply outside the Gateway timetable. If they haven't, we can't accept an application outside the timetable.

**Hi, Chambers advertised in the last round but later cancelled it. What influenced these decisions and what happened to the applications received?**

We regret that greatly. I can't obviously divulge the detailed reasons but it related to the consequences of Covid. We have retained the applications in anonymous form in order to monitor them for equality purposes.

**MINI PUPILLAGE:**

**Are you offering mini-pupillages at the moment? How do we apply?**

We will be accepting applications for our 2022 mini pupillage scheme between 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. Successful candidates will then be invited to find a mutually convenient date in 2022 for their mini-pupillage to take place.

**If successful in obtaining a mini pupillage is there any room to only do 2-3 days due to personal commitments?**

Yes. The maximum period is a week but there is no minimum. This is a change we made recently as we recognised that requiring a commitment of a week was an unnecessary barrier for many people.

**Can you apply for the mini pupillage if you have not finished bar school?**

Yes. We ask only that you have at least started an undergraduate course

**Will 1CL be in a position to offer any mini-pupillages prior to the pupillage application close date of 9 Feb 22? In other words, will applications be assessed as they come in, or will you be waiting until the end of January when your application window closes?**

We will assess all applications after the close date. Part of the reason for this is it allows us to calibrate the marks and make sure that we mark them as fairly as possible. Successful applicants will then have the rest of the year to complete their mini-pupillage. At the moment we have people spending mini-pupillages with us who applied in January this year.

**From when the application for a mini pupillage is submitted, how long does it take to hear back if we have been successful?**

We will aim to contact all candidates (successful and unsuccessful) in March 2022.

**How long does the mini pupillage last for? And does your location matter as I live 4 hours from Chancery Lane.**

Mini pupillages last for up to one week, but can be shorter if that suits the candidate better. It is easier if you are in London but location is not vital as there may be the opportunity to attend remote hearings or possibly attend courts out of London. It will be dependent on what is in the diaries at that particular time.

**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:**

**I was interested to know whether 1 Chancery Lane would consider offering more flexible/ part-time pupillages for disabled/chronically ill students who are unable to work full time.**

We will always consider what reasonable adjustments are required for those offered pupillage. We would encourage you to apply through the normal process and then we will make adjustments to the way in which you pursue your pupillage according to your individual requirements.

**What % of your barristers are ethnic minorities? Women? Mature students?**

Our diversity data is available here - <https://1chancerylane.com/about/policies-and-procedures/>

**Are there any funding/schemes for those from ethnic minority backgrounds?**

Ella is talking about that as we speak. See, for example, 10000 Black Interns, with which we are working. <https://www.10000blackinterns.com/>

**Where are those schemes please?**

Some of them are listed here: <https://1chancerylane.com/join-us/diversity-and-inclusion/>

**I've had a look at your website, and there is not a single black face, I understand you are working really hard to change this, what is your target? And by when?**

We do have two tenants who are of ethnic minority origin, but we recognise that it is not good enough. We have historically had colleagues of black origin. We obviously want to achieve as close to parity with the proportions of people in our society, so that we are truly representative. It will be a slow process because of the way in which we recruit - mainly from our pupils. One of our newly recruited probationary tenants and our new pupil on accelerated pupillage are both of ethnic minority origin. I hope that is a sign of some modest progress.

**In terms of mentoring, have chambers considered/considering a reciprocal/reverse mentoring scheme as part of diversity and inclusion?**

It's not something we've explicitly considered yet - but it's an interesting idea. As I say, our mentoring policy is being reviewed at the moment and this may be something we could consider as part of that.

**Often for some people of ethnic minority groups, their identity is a key part or reason for them pursuing a career at the bar. If the application process is set to ignore this, will mention of this hinder an application?**

It won't hinder it at all. For example, you may have a reason to mention your background when answering the questions in the social mobility section of our form.

**INTERNATIONAL:**

**Do you welcome pupillage applications from people who will be temporarily living abroad during the pupillage application process? If yes, would you eventually be happy to arrange virtual interviews?**

Yes, we are prepared to be flexible in interview arrangements. For example, one year when I was chairing the interview panel, we interviewed one candidate by telephone link because of her personal difficulties in attending.

**May I know if an international student who has no mooting experience can apply for pupillage? Or would you prefer an experienced mooter who is also a local?**

We would welcome applications from international students. Mooting is not everything, but most pupillage applicants will have done at least some.

**Do chambers sponsor work permit visa for international students?**

It is not something we have done historically, and the process is quite involved. We would need to be satisfied that the candidate intends to live and practice in the UK in order to consider such a course of action.

**LIFE AT 1CL:**

**How do you create the sense of team and collaboration when you are all self-employed vs belonging to a firm?**

I think the self-employed nature of practice does present a hurdle to building a sense of teamwork and

collaboration, and certainly this isn't something that law firms need to worry about. Nevertheless, there is definitely a sense at 1CL that we are all working together to further our collective reputation in the market. We hold regular practice group meetings to discuss (for example) marketing or client engagement, and senior members of chambers are always willing to have a chat about how to develop your practice and build relationships with clients.

**Can you just speak about a typical day as a barrister? The type of work you have to do etc.**

I can't say that I have a typical day, and this is (in my view) one of the better features of life at the civil bar. In an average week I can expect to be in Court (most often remotely) around 3-4 times with various application hearings and trials. The applications can cover the breadth of Chambers' work, though the trials will generally concern fast-track personal injury claims. I will also have paperwork - e.g., preparing an advice or drafting a defence - to do on top of that.

**What is the transition like from pupillage to tenancy? In particular what is the support provided by Chambers?**

Personally, I did not find the transition from pupillage to tenancy to be particularly difficult. The work I was doing at the start of tenancy was similar to the work I was doing towards the end of my second-six, and I felt that pupillage really prepared me for the realities of practice. As for the support in Chambers, my colleagues are extremely generous with their time and always willing to chat through difficult legal (or other!) problems with me. This makes a big difference. The support provided in the clerks' room is similarly important - for example, they can help you manage your diary / workload and guide you on important topics such as practice / client management.

**May you speak a little about the chancery and commercial type of work you do?**

The chancery work is mainly property-based, although we also do wills and trusts work. The commercial work involves contract and agency disputes and regulatory work.

**What proportion of your work is traditional PI as compared with the other areas you mentioned - public law, commercial etc.?**

Certainly for very junior members I think PI is probably the majority of our work. But there is the opportunity to do other work within our other practice areas.

**What proportion of your work is related to commercial?**

We do a fair amount of insurance-related work and contract-related disputes, if that comes under the heading of "commercial". It is not a large area of practice, though I cannot give you a percentage.

**Is it usual / possible to do both commercial and PI/clinical negligence work?**

Almost any combination is possible. We tend to start our junior tenants off with a wide range of work, which tends to gradually narrow as you get further into practice.

**USEFUL LINKS:**

**1CL Virtual Open Day Recording** - [https://youtu.be/ORX0I8E\\_pkc](https://youtu.be/ORX0I8E_pkc)

**Pupillage Information** – <https://1chancerylane.com/join-us/pupillage/>

**Mini Pupillage Information** - <https://1chancerylane.com/join-us/mini-pupillage/>

**Diversity & Inclusion at 1CL** - <https://1chancerylane.com/join-us/diversity-and-inclusion/>