

2024/25



APPLICANT GUIDE

Charity No: 1190369 | 218 Strand, London, WC2R 1AT



Please note that this document contains provisional dates and planned activities which are subject to change before the beginning of the 24/25 Academy depending on availability and capacity.

APPLICANT
GUIDE

CONTENTS

01

Welcome

02

Our Team

03

Introduction

04

Our Vision

06

Academy Overview

08

Academy Structure

10

Academy Timeline

12

Welcome Event

13

Personal Development

16

Mini-pupillages

17

Lecture Series

20

Internships

CONTENTS

23

Mentoring

25

Online Advocacy

27

interview Advocacy

29

Graduation

30

Additional Support

32

Academy FAQs

33

Academy Impact

41

Eligibility & Criteria

42

Applications

44

Application Instructions

46

Marking

48

Application tips

WELCOME

For all of your continued support

Dear Potential Candidates,

What does it mean to be committed to diversity and inclusion? By definition, diversity recognises that people are different, and inclusion is recognising that these differences are a benefit, and are to be welcomed in any given space. The goal of inclusion is to create a space whereby everyone can feel accepted.

With this in mind, I am delighted to present to you this year's applicant guide, which will walk you through all that the Bridging the Bar Academy could offer you as one of our candidates. The programme has been specifically designed to take applicants from non-traditional backgrounds and put them through a pre-pupillage Boot Camp that provides the experience, skills, and confidence needed to pursue a career at the bar.

Through taking candidates through this programme and 'bridging' the gap in opportunity, we hope to diversify the face of the bar and make it a more welcoming place for all.

Warm regards,

Imogen Sherriff

Imogen Sherriff
Programmes Manager



OUR TEAM

Meet our incredible team

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mass Ndow-Njie, Founder



Aaron Mayers, Co-founder



Matt Seallow, Board Member



Srishti Suresh, Board Member



Sonia Masaun, Board Member



Abdul Qadim, Board Member



Anu Lal, Board Member



Ishan Kolhatkar, Board Member



Eleanor Tack, Board Member



Emma Hughes, Board Member

STAFF



Eloise Freire, Programmes Intern



Ronnie Evans, Partnerships Manager



Imogen Sherriff, Programme Manager



Fatima Ali, Programmes Assistant



BRIDGING THE BAR

"It is a privilege to see the next generation from all walks of life shine and be elevated. They are the future of the bar and what a bright future that will be."

- **Emma Hughes**, Executive Committee Member

INTRODUCTION

Get to know us and our mission

Bridging the Bar ('BTB') is a charitable organisation that exists to bridge the gap between students from non-traditional backgrounds and the skills, experience, and networks required to develop a career at the Bar. We believe that for the Bar to reach its full potential, it must reflect the diverse society in which we live.

Diversity and inclusion is a cornerstone issue for Bridging the Bar; founded with the mission of producing a bar that reflects society so that it may serve society, the issue of diversity and inclusion has guided every step the Charity has taken as we disrupt the status quo. However, this bold aim has not come without its challenges and setbacks. Bridging the Bar was a start up charity that had to carve the path for our successes to follow.

Whilst we recognise the positive work being carried out to establish greater equality of access to opportunities at the Bar, it is clear that gaps still exist. BTB works towards closing that gap by supporting aspiring barristers and those organisations and individuals already championing diversity at the Bar. We believe that by actively providing opportunities and resources to bridge the gap between traditional and non-traditional applicants, Bridging the Bar is helping to drive the kind of high-quality applications from diverse aspiring barristers that will eventually change the face of the profession.

Join over 4,000 Bridging the Bar Alumni, 70 barrister Chambers across the UK, 19 sponsorship partners and over 300 legal professionals in supporting BTB in achieving our vision for a society where the Bar is accessible for everyone regardless of race, sex, class or other characteristics.

WHO WE HELP



**Low Income
Background**



BAME



LGBTQ+



Disability



+ More

OUR VISION

At BTB, we believe that in order to truly serve society the bar must reflect society; without being able to pull from a wealth of differing perspectives and experience, we as practitioners will be less able to serve those who come from backgrounds that are dissimilar to our own.

BTB was founded to address this issue. We believe that the “bridge” between today’s Bar and the diverse Bar that our society needs can be built by achieving three core objectives:



EQUAL ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

An integral part of equal access to opportunity at the Bar is to provide students from non-traditional backgrounds with the ability to gain practical work experience with barristers. The internship and mini-pupillage opportunities that candidates receive as part of the Academy provides students from all backgrounds with the opportunity to gain exposure to life at the Bar. This is the insight needed for students to understand what career options are available to them, and specifically, what a career at the Bar looks like.

OUR VISION

COLLABORATION

We welcome any dynamic support of our initiative, whether via the methods suggested, through tailored networking events, educational panels or entirely new ideas. There is an abundance of creative enterprises working to tackle many of the aims we share. BTB is continuously willing to discuss collaborating with organisations who share our aims. We recognise that in addition to helping people at a grassroots level, a pillar of what we do is forming strategic relationships with our regulators so that we can engage in conversations at a decision making level, provide feedback and create new schemes to help those who need and deserve it.



RAISING ASPIRATIONS

In order for diversity at the Bar to flourish, diversity in aspirations must be encouraged. At BTB we are dedicated to cultivating and sustaining the courage and belief it takes to opt for the Bar as a career path. Such cultivation runs through the heart of our Academy and can be seen most prominently in our personal development 'Pod' sessions, which focus on issues which typically undermine the aspirations of non-traditional applicants.



THE ACADEMY

"Launching the Bridging the Bar Academy is the natural next step for our charity. We intend to take our activities to a new higher level."

- **Mass Ndow-Njie**, Founder and Chairperson

ACADEMY OVERVIEW

THE IDEA

The Academy was born from a desire to maximise BTB's impact on our candidates, both in terms of number and in terms of outcomes.

This led to the idea of a comprehensive programme, which would provide not only tangible experience and skills to those who traditionally may suffer from a lack of access to the profession, but also to assist candidates in obtaining the mindset needed to succeed in such a competitive field.



OVERVIEW

From one application process, 100 candidates are provided access to internships, mentoring, mini-pupillage schemes, professional development workshops, interview advocacy training, application feedback, and networking opportunities.



In running such a comprehensive Academy programme, we hope to both assist our candidates in securing pupillage, while also creating a future generation of Barristers who will become champions of diversity at the Bar in their own right.

Please note that the Academy programme is a **taught programme** which means that attendance at Academy events is mandatory for successful applicants.

ACADEMY OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES

In designing the Academy programme, five objectives were adopted:

- 1.To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
- 2.To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.
- 3.To improve the quality of each candidate's pupillage interview technique.
- 4.To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
- 5.To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their careers.



These objectives were selected as those that best assisted with our more general aim of helping our candidates to improve their pupillage prospects. These objectives guided the structure of each event, in addition to the programme as a whole, and gave us metrics by which to measure our successes.

ACADEMY STRUCTURE

DESIGN

The overall structure of the Academy mimics the academic year with events running from October until July. The design of the programme has been undertaken with our overall aims in mind, and so each Academy event has been tailored to both address a specific issue that candidates from non-traditional backgrounds face, while also targeting at least one of our stated objectives

Event	Summary	Objectives
Personal Development Sessions	Five sessions led by legal professionals covering topics that include 'courage before confidence' and 'collective community success'.	Interview technique Mindset Championing Diversity
Mini-pupillages	Two rounds of mini-pupillages in a candidates area of interest.	Content of Applications Written Applications
Access to the Bar, Culture Change, Retention & Progression Lecture	Candidates will participate in a lecture which focuses on issues surrounding non-traditional legal professionals.	Contents of Application Mindset Championing Diversity

ACADEMY STRUCTURE CONT.

Event	Summary	Objectives
Internships	Selected candidates will spend a week shadowing at either the UK Supreme Court, High Court/Court of Appeal, Law Commission or Advocate.	Content of Applications Mindset Championing Diversity
Mentoring	Candidates will be paired with a Barrister in their preferred practice area for a year long mentoring relationship	Written Applications Interview technique Mindset Championing Diversity
Advocacy Training	Candidates will participate in both an online course and also spend time in Chambers improving on their answers to advocacy questions	Content of Applications Written Applications

ACADEMY STRUCTURE CONT.

Event	Summary	Objectives
Alternative Opportunities Workshop	Candidates will participate in a workshop where they will hear from various stakeholders about different job opportunities available for aspiring barristers who wish to gain further experience	Content of Applications Mindset Championing Diversity
Essay Competition	Candidates will have the opportunity to take part in Bridging the Bar Academy's first ever Essay competition	Written Applications Content of Applications Mindset Championing Diversity
Mooting Competition	Candidates will have the opportunity to participate in Bridging the Bar's first ever Mooting Competition where candidates are paired to compete against each other in teams to develop their advocacy skills	Content of Applications Mindset Written Applications

THE WELCOME EVENT

GETTING STARTED

To launch the Academy year, all candidates attend the welcome event which aims to orient candidates in anticipation of the Academy course and prepare them for the upcoming programmes.

During this event, candidates have the programme explained in more detail, are familiarised with Academy policies, such as the Code of Conduct and Absence policy, and are given direction as to how and where they can access any additional Academy support that they might need. This is also the first opportunity that candidates have to meet their pods, discussed in further detail under the personal development section, and so familiarise themselves with the Academy support network they will be relying on during the year.



THE COACHING POD PROGRAMME

OBJECTIVES

Prior to the UKSC internship in 2022, all interns received a personal coaching session to prepare them. Post internship, it was highlighted to us just how much of a difference coaching can make to the interns' confidence. Therefore, we intended on replicating this success by providing coaching for all our 100 candidates on the BTB Academy. These sessions will consist of a full day event split between a Coaching session and an interactive workshop led by practitioners.

This coaching was intended to address three Academy objectives:

- To improve the quality of each candidate's pupillage interview technique.
- To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
- To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their careers.

THE SESSIONS

We have organised one introductory session for the cohort and four other sessions for each Pod. Each session has been designed to tackle a specific issue:

1. **Courage Before Confidence & CV Building Workshop** - This session deals with a lack of confidence which often affects those from disadvantaged backgrounds and addresses how courage can help fill this gap followed by a CV Building workshop.
2. **Owning Your Story & Leadership Training Workshop** - This session focuses on reframing candidates' perceptions of their own stories, by encouraging candidates to find power in their own narratives, followed by a Leadership Training workshop.
3. **Being vs Doing & Interview Techniques Workshop** - This session helps tackle the idea that being born without certain privileges or qualities can forestall a career at the Bar followed by a an Interview Techniques workshop.
4. **Collective Success & Next Steps Workshop** - This seeks to reframe the comparative lens into a collaborative one by focusing on how candidates can help one another followed by a Next Seps workshop.

THE COACHING POD PROGRAMME



THE PODS

In order to implement this we split our BTB Academy candidates into groups which we dubbed 'Pods'. Each pod consists of around 10 candidates, as well as a coach who takes the role of pod leader. We wanted to ensure that candidates feel supported in sharing, and so have adopted small groups in order to facilitate a safe and comfortable environment.

THE COACHES

We recruited volunteer practitioners to lead coaching sessions for the Pod to which they have been assigned. Each Pod leader attends a four-hour coaching training session led by Helen Gazzì, a performance and leadership coach with years of experience in the industry.

We also provide Volunteer Coaches with training from an accredited mediator on facilitating conversations, de-escalating conflict and dealing with difficult questions, training on organising content for the sessions and gave advice on leading the sessions.

THE FIRST 23/24 POD SESSION



A bar that represents also benefits society.

MINI PUPILLAGE PROGRAMME

We have partnered with various Chambers to provide all 100 of our candidates with a mini-pupillage in their intended area of practice. Each mini-pupillage will provide individual candidates with the chance to shadow practising barristers and get a real insight into what life at the Bar actually looks like.



The inclusion of mini-pupillages will target two of our Academy objectives:

- 1.To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
- 2.To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.

Candidates from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have existing legal connections from which they can secure mini-pupillages. To address this we undertake two rounds of minis within any one Academy year: the first is mandatory with all Candidates being placed and all minis being completed between October and January; the second is optional for our non-intern candidates with all minis being completed between February and June. The exact timing of the minis is up to a candidate's assigned chambers.

Delivered by Elaine Banton

ACCESS & CHANGE AT THE BAR LECTURE

The Academy holds a lecture focusing on the challenges facing barristers from underrepresented groups. The lecture will be delivered by Elaine Banton, a barrister at 7BR and an elected Bencher at the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple. Elaine is also the co-chair of the Bar Council's Equality, Diversity and Social Mobility Committee.

The lecture is designed to address three of the Academy's objectives:

1. To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
2. To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
3. To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their careers.



The lecture allows candidates to enter the Bar with these issues at the forefront of their mind, allowing them to enter the profession with the knowledge of these issues, and how to contribute to fixing it. The lectures are followed by networking, to facilitate open discussions between candidates.

Delivered by Elaine Banton

ACCESS & CHANGE AT THE BAR LECTURE

The lecture will address the two main topics of: Access to the bar and culture change and Retention and Progression at the Bar. Here candidates will have a chance to interact with the information provided through a Q&A segment.

ACCESS TO THE BAR AND CULTURE CHANGE

Part-one of the lecture focuses on access to, and culture change at the Bar. Candidates will engage in discussions on how to help improve diversity at the Bar through education, training and schemes, such as this lecture.



RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

Part two of the lecture series focuses on retention and progression at the Bar. Elaine discusses issues which cause those from underrepresented groups to leave practice more frequently than their more traditional counterparts. The candidates engage in discussions about how they will seek to overcome such issues during their careers, and how these problems might be more widely addressed at a systematic level.



ACCESS & CHANGE AT THE BAR LECTURE

A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark blazer, stands at a white podium in a grand hall with high ceilings and large columns. She is addressing an audience of young people seated in rows of grey chairs. To her left, a large screen displays a presentation slide with text about the ELBA and bar-wide issues. The room has dark wood paneling and a large white column with an ornate capital.

A bar that represents also benefits society.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP

OBJECTIVES

The Additional Opportunities Workshop meets three objectives:

- 1.To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
- 2.To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
- 3.To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their career

The aim is to provide aspiring barristers from non-traditional backgrounds with a chance to hear from various legal institutions about the different job roles available for them. These job opportunities will allow our candidates to gain further work experience and insight into the legal world while also allowing them to gain the necessary skills which they can apply in their Pupillage applications.

The talks will cover what responsibilities are included in these roles and a detailed overview of the application process.



It was a pleasure to welcome a second group of excellent Bridging the Bar interns to the Supreme Court this year, building on the successes of the first year of the programme in 2021.

- Lord Reed, UKSC Justice

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES

OBJECTIVES

The internship programmes meet three objectives:

1. To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
2. To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
3. To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their career.

During the course of the previous academic year, BTB has successfully partnered with the UK Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court, the Law Commission and Advocate to organise paid internships for our BTB candidates. Of these, the judicial internships are one-week long, the Law Commission internship is 3 days long while the Advocate internship is one month.



The aim is to provide aspiring barristers from non-traditional backgrounds with a chance to gain exposure and feel comfortable in these legal settings. The internships were designed, in collaboration with our partners, to be challenging, intellectually stimulating and rewarding for our candidates.

It was a pleasure to welcome a second group of excellent Bridging the Bar interns to the Supreme Court this year, building on the successes of the first year of the programme in 2021.

- Lord Reed, UKSC Justice

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES

PRE-TRAINING FOR JUDICIAL INTERNSHIPS

Prior to the commencement of the UK Supreme Court, High Court and Court of Appeal internships in November 2024, we will provide the successful candidates with a pre-training session which will give them an overview of the week ahead and answer any questions they might have. This session includes talks from representatives of the court, as well as featuring experiences shared by BTB's 2023 UK Supreme Court interns.

The aim of this training is to prepare the interns for the rigour of the internship and ensure they are ready to excel during their week-long placement. Workshop places are also extended to Law Commission interns.



JUDICIAL INTERNSHIPS

Following the pre-training, candidates will complete a five-day placement where they shadow Judicial Assistants, take part in roundtable discussions with Judges with the aim of facilitating mutual learning, and, on the final day, give presentations in front of Judges to conclude their experience.

It was a pleasure to welcome a second group of excellent Bridging the Bar interns to the Supreme Court this year, building on the successes of the first year of the programme in 2021.

- Lord Reed, UKSC Justice

THE UKSC INTERNS



2023

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

THE OBJECTIVES

Following the success of our pilot mentoring programme in 2020, we decided to incorporate this into the design of the Academy. All 100 candidates will be matched for 1-to-1 mentoring with a practising barrister who shares the Candidate's intended practice area and diversity characteristics. The year long mentoring relationship will commence in October 2024, and will require the candidates to complete a Personal Development Plan (PDP) over the course of the mentoring sessions.



The mentoring programme is structured to target four key Academy objectives:

1. To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.
2. To improve the quality of each candidate's pupillage interview technique.
3. To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
4. To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their careers.

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

THE MENTORING

All Academy mentors are provided with a mentoring guide to facilitate the mentee-mentor relationship. This document provides a structure for the mentors which covers everything from the initial meeting to final feedback. As the objectives of the mentoring are weighted towards successful pupillage applications, a focus has been put on providing candidates with help in application planning, application guidance, and interview technique practice.



Delivered by Bibi Badejo

ONLINE ADVOCACY TRAINING



ONLINE ADVOCACY TRAINING

The online advocacy training is led by The Advocacy Coach Bibi Badejo, deputy head of 4 Brick Court Chambers, founder of The Advocacy Coach and host of The Advocacy Podcast. The Advocacy Coach provides all relevant materials and offers practical support enabling candidates to improve their advocacy performance skills. The training is comprised of an online course and a live event.



The online advocacy training course was developed to target three Academy objectives:

1. To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
2. To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.
3. To improve the quality of each candidate's pupillage interview technique.

Delivered by Bibi Badejo

ONLINE ADVOCACY TRAINING



THE ONLINE COURSE

Candidates are provided with innovative exercises, which allows them to gain a deeper understanding of the techniques which are crucial to a successful advocate. The modules include topics such as, how to develop a case theory, how to be confident in oral addresses and how to be in control as the cross examiner.

THE LIVE EVENT

Candidates are invited to a live virtual event to practice the skills they have learned from the online course.

During the event candidates are provided with real-life court scenarios, and have to prepare a range of advocacy tasks, including a cross-examination and a closing speech. The candidates then present, and work with professionally trained actors, experienced in court simulations.



Following the presentations, candidates are allowed to ask questions about the course and were provided tailored feedback so that our candidates are able to work effectively on their advocacy skills.

INTERVIEW ADVOCACY TRAINING

INTERVIEW ADVOCACY TRAINING

Following the success of our interview advocacy training pilot delivered in 2022, with 6KBW Chambers, we have decided to incorporate this as an official Academy programme and expand participation to all candidates on the Academy. We have partnered with 15 Chambers, who will have sessions over two Saturdays between November and December 2024. These sessions will cover specific advocacy exercises ranging from statutory interpretation to bail applications.

Many candidates from underrepresented backgrounds may have a lack of experience in handling such exercises. For some, financial concerns may have left little time for such engagement, while others may have simply not had the access to such opportunities. This opportunity aims to expose our candidates to new interview techniques and allow them to receive detailed 1-to-1 feedback which they will utilise during their Pupillage interviews.



OBJECTIVES

The interview advocacy training course was developed to target three Academy objectives:

1. To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
2. To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.
3. To improve the quality of each candidate's pupillage interview technique.

THE INTERVIEW ADVOCACY TRAINING



ESSAY COMPETITION

ESSAY COMPETITION

This competition will give our candidates a chance to hone their writing and research skills before the Pupillage gateway commences. The essay question will aim to focus on a relevant issue relating to the Diversity and Inclusion at the Bar which the candidates will be encouraged to research and critically discuss.

The candidates will then be given a month to research and write their submissions. Once their responses are submitted they will be marked by volunteer practitioners with the highest scoring candidate receiving a prize and certificate.

OBJECTIVES

The essay competition was developed to target three Academy objectives:

- 1.To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
- 2.To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.
- 3.To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.
- 4.To equip our candidates with the tools to champion diversity and inclusion within the profession and throughout their careers.



MOOTING COMPETITION

MOOTING COMPETITION

This competition will give our candidates a chance to build on their advocacy skills. Participating candidates will be placed in teams of 2 and will compete a maximum of 3 rounds, with the highest scoring candidates progressing to the next round. The competition is scheduled to take place over four months concluding before the opening of the Pupillage gateway.

Each round will be marked by volunteer practitioners with the 4 highest scoring candidates receiving a prize and certificate at the Graduation Event which takes place at the end of the academic year.

OBJECTIVES

The mooting competition was developed to target three Academy objectives:

- 1.To improve the content of our candidates' pupillage applications.
- 2.To improve the quality of candidates' written pupil applications.
- 3.To equip our candidates with the mindset tools required to succeed within the profession.



GRADUATION EVENT

GRADUATION EVENT

At the end of the Academy year, graduates will attend a graduation event which celebrates their achievement in graduating from the programme. Successful graduates will be verifiable as graduates by chambers, will get a certificate of graduation, and be granted access to the BTB Alumni network for ongoing support.



To graduate from the Academy, candidates must successfully complete all aspects of the programme, complete all associated work, and attend all of the Academy events.

ALUMNI NETWORK

The Alumni network has been created, following on from our successful Academy pilot year, to ensure Academy graduates have access to the support and guidance they need to ensure success in their journey.

Launched in the summer of 2023, this scheme has provided access to events which support the development of practice, maintain a network of support between Alumni and BTB volunteers, as well as giving Alumni the opportunity to themselves support the Academy programme.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

RESILLIANCE FUND

Within the Academy budget, we will reserve £10,000 to provide financial assistance to candidates during the 24/25 Academy cycle. This Resilience fund is accessible to candidates who are experiencing financial difficulties which would prevent them from engaging with Academy events. From this fund, we not only contribute to travel and accommodation costs, but also to costs that can be associated with the diversity characteristics of our candidates such as hiring carers to cover the period that a candidate with caring responsibilities might be at an Academy event.



Coming from a working class background and living in the North-West whilst working part time and completing the Bar Course, finance has been a barrier for me for travelling to London frequently and partaking in important programmes. However, with the assistance received, I have been able to complete such programmes ranging from interview advocacy training, the lecture series and mini-pupillages- all which are crucial to my future at the Bar. I thank Bridging the Bar for this assistance, without which I would be on an unequal playing field to my peers.

-Megha Banerjee,
Academy 23/24 Candidate

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

CONSULTANCY PANEL

The consultancy panel offers our candidates an opportunity to receive constructive feedback in relation to their upcoming pupillage applications. Candidates can submit requests for help which include: pupillage application review & advice; pupillage application proofreading; CV checks; general advice sessions regarding the pupillage application process; mock pupillage interviews; and help with specific advocacy exercises.



We are delighted to report that we have had an overwhelmingly positive reception to this scheme, with over 80 legal professionals from a wide range of practice areas having signed up to provide this help to our candidates via the consultancy panel.

We hope that having individual tailored feedback on any and all aspects of the pupillage process will empower our candidates with the skills and know-how to excel in the upcoming round of pupillage applications.

ACADEMY FAQS

OUR FAQS

Is this an online course?

No. While the online advocacy training course and live event are online, the rest of the Academy programme is in-person (with a possible exception for intervening events). There are no hybrid options, and in-person attendance is mandatory unless specifically stated otherwise.

Can I undertake the Academy while in work or study?

Absolutely! The programme has been designed to fit around either work or study. The majority of Academy events are on the weekend to facilitate easy attendance by those with other commitments in the week. We do expect, however, for candidates to make suitable arrangements in advance of events to enable them to attend.

Where are the Academy events held?

Currently, whole-cohort Academy events are held in London, however, we have pod sessions taking place in the north. For interview advocacy training and mini-pupillages, we endeavour to place you close to your chosen home location, but please note that we cannot guarantee you will get your chosen location for the Academy 24/25 cycle.

Is there any cost to the Academy?

The Academy is totally free to candidates - there are no fees to pay. However, there will be some associated travel costs to get to the events. Bridging the Bar does have a financial assistance scheme in place for those for which the costs would be genuinely prohibitive.

How can I find out more?

You can email us - for a copy of our policies and guidelines, please email info@bridgingthebar.org. For general Academy enquiries, please email programmes@bridgingthebar.org.



ACADEMY IMPACT

"These future barristers will pave the way for a more diverse and inclusive profession, and I cannot wait to see it."

– **Eleanor Tack**,
BTB Executive Committee Member

ACADEMY IMPACT

IMPACT REPORTS

While Bridging the Bar has been delivering impactful programmes to candidates since 2020, 2022/23 was our Academy Pilot year. The Academy is Bridging the Bar's flagship programme; it has consolidated all programmes in to one scheme which comprehensively prepares candidates for their pupillage journey.

However, for those parts of the Academy that were run as separate programmes before the Academy launch, we have seen meaningful impact on the careers and aspirations of our candidates. Some of these highlights are included in this section of the brochure.



100 CANDIDATES
SELECTED FOR
THE ACADEMY



199 PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEERS
ASSIGNED AS MENTORS, POD
LEADERS, OR CONSULTANCY PANEL
CONTRIBUTORS

ACADEMY IMPACT

**36**

INTERNSHIPS

WITH THE UKSC, COURT OF
APPEAL/HIGH COURT, GLD,
ADVOCATE, & THE LAW
COMMISSION

**160**

MINI PUPILLAGES
UNDERATKEN BY BTB
CANIDATES

**49**

PARTNER CHAMBERS

OFFERING MINI PUPILLAGES OR
INTERVIEW ADVOCACY TRAINING
TO BTB candidates

**23**

SPONSORSHIP PARTNERS
SUPPORTING BTB

THE MENTORING PROGRAMME

MUTUAL LEARNING

At BTB, we view mutual learning as crucially important, both to the development of our candidates, but also to our mission of improving diversity and inclusion as a whole. In emphasising mutual learning in our mentee and mentor guides, we hope that, as well as providing invaluable practice and feedback to our candidates, the mentoring relationship also fosters shared learning in our professional volunteers. In this way, we hope to reinforce the importance of diversity inclusion at the Bar to legal professionals practising today.

3,600+

Hours of mentoring

“

My mentor was fantastic. We talked through what would, and would not, help me in applications. He gave me helpful tips on how to approach the application cycle. Throughout the sessions he's been approachable, and responsive. I'm now much more confident in becoming a barrister thanks to his help and guidance.

”



Bradley Murphy, 23/24 Candidate

THE UKSC INTERNSHIP

In February 2021 BTB made a pitch to the UK Supreme Court (UKSC) who subsequently agreed to collaborate with us and create an internship programme. We're happy to report that November 2023 saw our third cohort of candidates participate in this yearly internship programme.

3

UKSC internship cycles completed

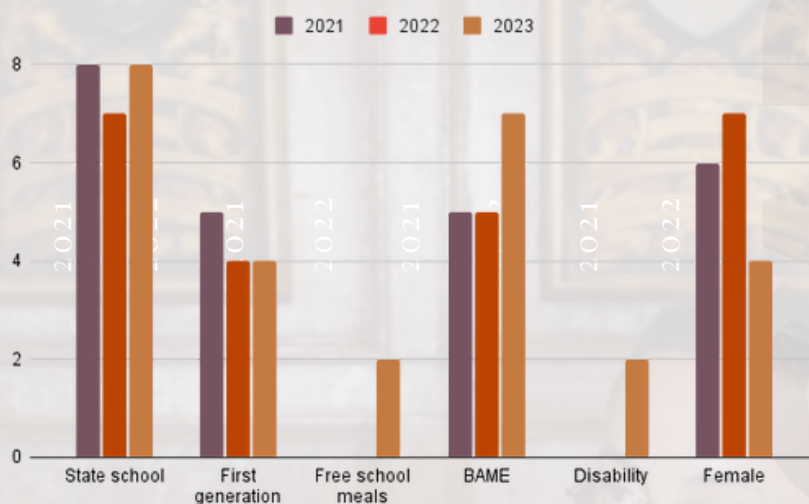
24

UKSC internships undertaken

85%

Of 2021 UKSC Interns Secured Pupillage

Characteristics of interns by internship year



“It was a privilege to welcome the eight Bridging the Bar interns to the Court. They were a thoughtful and engaging group of people, who enriched our discussions about the appeals being heard in the Supreme Court that week. The Judicial Assistants were delighted to have them as colleagues.”

- Rebecca Fry, UKSC Head JA

UKSC INTERN TESTIMONIALS

“



Esmaa Mansour, UKSC Intern 2023

The Supreme Court internship was nothing short of exceptional. The opportunity to engage with the sharpest legal minds in the country, witness effective advocacy, and foster a deeper understanding of the judicial system has been an unparalleled opportunity.

Beyond the academic enrichment, this experience has propelled my confidence and self belief. This experience has allowed me to envision myself at Bar, one that is committed to fostering a more inclusive future

”

“

The internship was a truly golden opportunity which I will carry forward with me in my career. I had unparalleled insight into the workings of the Supreme Court, appellate advocacy and legal analysis. Engaging at length in discussions with the Justices and delivering a speech before them has also boosted my confidence. The internship has left me well equipped to apply for pupillage.

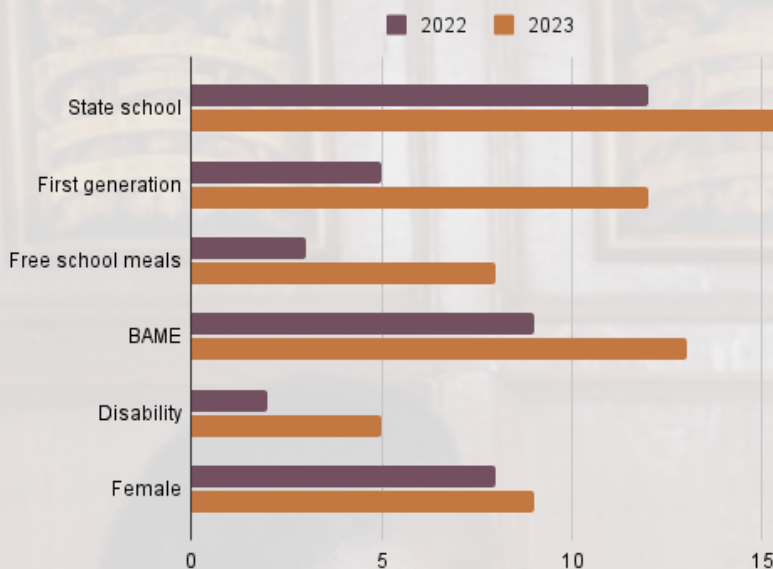


Safia Yousaf, UKSC Intern 2023

”

HIGH COURT & COURT OF APPEAL INTERNSHIPS

In March 2022, BTB, the High Court & Court of Appeal agreed to collaborate on a pilot internship for aspiring barristers from statistically under-represented backgrounds at the Bar. This internship took place during the first week of November 2022 where successful candidates were assigned to a judge and supported by their Judicial Assistant(s) in the High Court / Court of Appeal.



18
Interns

We are delighted to report that, due to the success of 2023/24's internship, it was agreed between BTB and the High Court / Court of Appeal (HC/COA) to maintain the number of interns for this year's intake to 18. This will allow us to share this opportunity with more candidates from this year's cohort, exposing them to new experiences.

"The BTB scheme is fantastic. My intern was clearly destined for great things. It was a pleasure to get to know her and to discuss her plans for the future. It is critically important that, as judges, we are involved in efforts to increase diversity within the legal professions and the judiciary. Those efforts include trying to demystify what to somebody with no connection with the law can appear both obscure and, worse still, unwelcoming. I look forward to taking further part in the scheme in the future."

- Mr Justice Picken, High Court Judge

HIGH COURT & COURT OF APPEAL INTERN TESTIMONIALS

“

During my internship at the Court of Appeal, I was immersed in a wealth of knowledge that will undoubtedly shape my path towards becoming a barrister. Witnessing exceptional advocacy firsthand and engaging in discussions with judges offered unparalleled insights into effective courtroom techniques and legal reasoning. Conversations with the judges not only enlightened me about the intricacies of life at the bar but also underscored the imperative need for diversity within the legal profession.



Abbas Hussain, HC/COA Intern 2023



Melissa Jarvis, HC/COA Intern 2023

I had the most amazing experience on the Court of Appeal internship. I was made to feel welcome on day 1 by the Lord and Lady Justices, and the Judicial Assistants. I learned so much about case preparation, case management and what the role a judge actually entails. This was by far the best experience I have had in my legal career. Having Lord Justices at the Court of Appeal tell me that I am good enough for this career has massively helped my confidence and I will take this forward into pupillage applications.

”

THE HIGH COURT & COURT OF APPEAL ROUNDTABLE





THE APPLICATION

“From day one, the Bridging the Bar team has asked itself: what is the best way to increase the chances of our candidates securing pupillage, whilst also preparing them for professional life at the bar? The BTB Academy is the answer.”

– **Aaron Mayers**, Vice-Chair

ELIGIBILITY & CRITERIA

Who do we select and how?

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for participation in the Academy candidates must:

1. Be studying the bar course in academic year 2024/25 (on either a part-time or full time basis) OR have previously completed the bar course;
AND
2. Be intending to apply for pupillage in 2025 AND
3. Have been state school educated AND
4. Have not attended Oxbridge at the undergraduate level AND
5. Have been supported through undergraduate through student loans or own employment AND
6. Be present in the UK and able to attend ALL Academy events listed in the programme

CRITERIA

The 100 candidates will be selected based on the following criteria:

1. A commitment to academic excellence through achieving strong grades at university.
2. An understanding of what a career at the Bar entails.
3. Clear and persuasive written communication skills i.e., appropriate structure, use of language and sentence structure.
4. Clear, persuasive and engaging oral advocacy skills.
5. Understanding of issues faced by candidates and barristers from underrepresented backgrounds at the Bar and a commitment to remedying these issues.
6. Ability of a candidate to share their background and experiences in a way which will facilitate mutual learning with fellow candidates and stakeholders.
7. Likelihood to benefit from participating in BTB Academy.

ACADEMY APPLICATIONS

The Process

To submit an application to the Academy, applicants must complete a two-stage application process which consists of a written portion and a video portion.

THE WRITTEN APPLICATION

The written application consists of collecting the applicant's background information, three written questions, and one pre-recorded video presentation. The pre-recorded video should be titled "BTB2425videopresentation" and be in MP4 format.

There is no time-limit on this section of the application and applicant's may revisit as many times as they like before submitting their answers.

THE VIDEO APPLICATION

Once an applicant has submitted the written portion of the application, they are emailed a confirmation email which contains a link to the video application platform.

The video application platform contains two unseen questions. The first focuses on the applicant's understanding of the Academy programme and their appreciation of their own personal development. For this question, the applicants have five minutes total time; this comprises up to three minutes of thinking time and the opportunity to record a video answer which is up to two minutes in length.

The second question is a topical question. For this question, applicants have ten minutes total; up to eight minutes of thinking time, and the opportunity to record a video answer of up to two minutes.

Applicants are prevented from recording answers that go over the allotted time, remaining on the page over the total question time, and the question pages are only accessible once.

THE TIMELINE

When are applications open?

Please note that this is a provisional timeline and may be subject to change.

Event	Date
Applications open	09:00 7th May 2024
Applications close	17:00 21th May 2024
Marks released	16th August 2024

Applications are due to open at 09:00 on 7th May 2024; the link to the application form will be available via our social media, as well as on our website under the Academy section.

Applications are due to close at 17:00 on the 21th May 2024; both the written and the video portions of the application will close at this time. Applicants should ensure they have left adequate time after submitting the written portion to also complete the video portion before the application deadline. Please note that incomplete applications will not be marked.

The timeline is a provisional timeline and may be subject to change: applicants who wish to be notified of any changes to the application timeline can sign up to our mailing list via the sign up button on the home page of our website.

THE PLATFORM

Instructions for applicants

THE WRITTEN APPLICATION

The written portion of the application is undertaken via a Google form accessible on our website under the Academy section.

Once applicants have submitted a written application, they will be emailed a link to the video platform to continue their application.

INSTRUCTIONS PAGE

The first page of this portal will take applicants through instructions for use, as well as FAQs. When applicants are happy with this information, they may click begin to login and access the unseen questions.

Please note that, while applicants may access the instructions page multiple times, the question pages are accessible **only once**.

CANDIDATE DETAILS

Applicants will then be taken to the candidate details page - this is where applicants can log in to access the unseen questions.

Candidate Details

First Name
Admin

Last Name
BridgingtheBar

Email
info@bridgingthebar.org

Please retype your email
info@bridgingthebar.org

232448446

This can be found in your written answers confirmation email
Your details are correct. Please click submit to begin the video questions.

Submit

Applicants should enter their details as given in the written application: applicants will receive their candidate number via email on submission of the written application.

When applicants have entered their details, we will check to see that they match what is on our system. Applicants should wait until this message in green is displayed before clicking submit.

THE PLATFORM

Instructions for applicants

THE UNSEEN QUESTIONS

Once applicants have submitted their details, they will be taken to the first of the unseen questions. On this page, both the question and the number of points available will be displayed to the applicant.



The **total time remaining** for this question will be displayed at the top of the page

An applicant's candidate number will be displayed above the video window.

Once the recording begins, the **recording time remaining** is displayed here.

To record, stop recording, submit the recording, and go to the next question, applicants should utilise these buttons.

Please note:

- The recording will be ended automatically at two minutes: applicants should ensure that their answer is completed within this time.
- Applicants will be taken immediately to the next question on submission of the first question.
- Questions must be answered in order: applicants **may not** view question 2 before answering question 1.
- Question pages are accessible **only once**.

THE MARKING

How does marking work?

THE PANELLISTS

We have recruited a panel of volunteer markers to grade the applications received. Applications are anonymised before being sent to these external markers, which should ensure that marking is undertaken without the possibility of bias.

All panellists are barristers themselves, of at least three years call, and so have experience with what makes a good application.

VERTICAL MARKING

Rather than asking our panellists to mark entire applications (horizontal marking), panellists will be allocated one criteria for one question to mark. For example, panellist X may be allocated question 2. This panellist will then mark all of the application cycle question 2s,

This has two main benefits:

- **Speed** – this vertical marking will enable panellists to mark applications quicker as panellists will only have to consider one criteria.
- **Consistency** – this speed means that panellists will be able to mark their allocated part of the question for all of our candidates. This makes the process much more consistent; if one marker is particularly harsh or generous then they will maintain this standard throughout all of the applications. Panellists will need to ensure they remain consistent with their own marking style, but this is significantly easier than remaining consistent with another panellists. Having sight of every single candidate's answer will also enable panellists to compare the standard of applications more broadly. As a result of this consistency, less moderation is required.

THE FEEDBACK

Adding value for applicants

APPLICATION FEEDBACK

We acknowledge the significant value of feedback for aspiring barristers: despite feedback being central to an applicant's growth and development, we recognise that it is often not provided to applicants when applying for pupillage.

We are asking markers to provide constructive feedback on each answer that they mark. While this feedback is not as extensive as feedback applicants may have received on academic work, there should be at least one line of feedback on each question answered.

We hope that having insight into the strengths and weaknesses of their applications will help all those that applied to improve their skills going forward.

QUESTION	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	PANELLIST FEEDBACK
1) What strength(s) do you possess which will make you a good barrister? Please discuss relevant work experience, legal or otherwise, to demonstrate these strengths. (250 words, 6 points available)	<u>Criteria 2</u> - An understanding of what a career at the Bar entails	Good engagement with the skills that are required to succeed at the Bar.
	<u>Criteria 3</u> - Clear and persuasive written communication skills i.e., appropriate structure, use of language and sentence structure	Overall, excellent but think about the amount of development in your second paragraph.
2) "Childcare commitments are the biggest factor preventing the retention and progression of women at the Bar." Do you agree?	<u>Criteria 2</u> - An understanding of what a career at the Bar entails	This is a fair answer with some research, addressing other aspects of the Bar which may impede retention or progression.
	<u>Criteria 3</u> - Clear and persuasive written communication skills i.e., appropriate	Broadly well written and clearly structured.

APPLICATION TIPS

How are applications graded

OUR TOP TIPS

- If you are unsure about the application, or have any questions on either the application process of the Academy, you can join our Academy FAQs online session at **17:30-19:00 2nd May 2024** for guidance. To sign up please either utilise the sign-up link on our website under the Academy section or email info@bridgingthebar.org
- Clarity is key! Make sure you take the time to structure your written answers in a way that enhances persuasiveness (there's no timeline here so feel free to rewrite as many times as you need within the application window). You can utilise the thinking time included in the video portion to make sure your answers to the unseen questions are clear too.
- Brush up on your understanding of D&I: some of our questions are D&I focused so having an understanding of this, both as a wider issue and in how it applies to you personally, will help your application shine.
- There are no do-overs for the video portion: you see the question once, you record once, and you submit once. So make sure you are fully prepared, with all tech working and a secure internet connection, before you access the video application.
- Be yourself! The strongest applications are typically the ones that have a self-assured point of view. So whatever your answer is, it will most likely be more persuasive and engaging if it's a reflection of your worldview.
- We are here to help! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to reach out to the programmes team at programmes@bridgingthebar.org.

GET IN TOUCH

TO FIND OUT MORE
WWW.BRIDGINGTHEBAR.ORG

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PROGRAMMES@BRIDGINGTHEBAR.ORG

FOR GROUP, PRESS AND MEDIA ENQUIRIES
INFO@BRIDGINGTHEBAR.ORG



@BridgeTheBar



Bridging The Bar



Bridging The Bar



@bridgingthebar

#BRIDGINGTHEBAR

Charity Number: 1190369 | 218 Strand, London, WC2R 1AT | bridgingthebar.org

*A bar that represents also benefits society.
A bar that represents also benefits society.*