

DWF Chambers Pupillage FAQs

We are always interested to hear from our prospective pupillage candidates. If the answer to your question is not set out in the FAQs below, please feel free to contact us at pupillage@dwf.law. Please note that this email inbox is not regularly monitored outside of pupillage recruitment season and, whilst we are always happy to answer genuine queries, we do not expect to hear from pupillage candidates in advance of submitting their applications.

What is the format of a pupillage at DWF Chambers?

In general terms, we offer pupillages which follow the traditional format of first 6 months non-practising and second 6 months practising subject to the supervision of a pupil supervisor. There are some exceptions in that our first six pupils are sometimes able to exercise the limited rights of audience of an unqualified advocate in interlocutory hearings and small claims thus enabling our pupils to conduct some advocacy during their first six months. We also offer shadowing opportunities throughout the full twelve months of pupillage where appropriate.

What is the difference between a pupillage at DWF Chambers and a pupillage in external chambers?

Pupillage at DWF Chambers is very similar to a pupillage in external chambers. Pupils can expect to shadow their pupil supervisor at court and at conferences and ADR as well assisting them with paperwork. One difference is that pupils are regarded as pupils to the advocacy team as a whole and we therefore offer shadowing opportunities with all team members.

Another difference is that pupils receive a salary throughout the duration of pupillage rather than a pupillage award and earnings from practice. Pupils also receive a pension and benefits package as well as payment of all expenses incurred at all stages of pupillage.

At DWF Chambers we have access to a large amount of high quality work and, whilst we always ensure that our pupils are comfortable with the work they do and we do not send pupils to do work outside of their level of experience, our pupils can expect to be engaged in fast track trials, CCMCs etc. during their second six months of pupillage.

We believe that the work which second six pupils can expect to conduct during second six months is unrivalled at the external bar. All work is fully supervised by both the pupil supervisor and the mentorship of the wider team.

I have a pupillage reduction from the BSB, can I do a reduced pupillage at DWF Chambers?

At DWF Chambers we routinely see applications from experienced county court advocates and those of similar pre-pupillage experience. We always ensure that we tailor the pupillage towards the successful candidate's prior experience to ensure that we build upon that experience.

We are able to offer a reduced pupillage in line with any reduction confirmed by the BSB however we will always defer to the discretion of the pupil supervisor when it comes to signing off successful completion of both the non-practising and practising periods of pupillage.

Will DWF Chambers pay for my compulsory pupillage courses and exams?

Yes, course fees and reasonable expenses for attendance at compulsory pupillage courses are covered by DWF Chambers. We also ensure that we make time available for pupils to prepare for and complete these mandatory elements of their training.

Pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their own pupillage and to organise their own continuing professional development including completion of compulsory pupillage courses and exams. Pupils are required to make arrangements to ensure compliance with all BSB requirements during pupillage.

We support pupils who are required to sit the pupillage based ethics exam. We understand that the BSB provide two attempts at this course free of charge and we expect our pupils to prepare appropriately and pass during these attempts. In the unfortunate situation whereby a pupil required a third attempt we will seek to provide financial assistance where possible.

What are the career progression opportunities at DWF Chambers?

We offer career development opportunities following qualification broadly in line with the career levels available to all fee earners within DWF. This means that our team

members are able to apply for promotion through various career levels during the annual promotions window.

We invest in our team in the hope that they will remain valued and supported members of our team and we offer each individual the opportunity to progress their career with DWF Chambers.

What is the timeline for application for pupillage at DWF Chambers?

We follow the timeline outlined in the pupillage gateway.

I haven't yet commenced the bar course, can I still apply for pupillage at DWF Chambers?

At DWF Chambers we recruit each year for pupils to start in the Autumn of that year. We do not see any particular benefit in requiring new recruits to wait over a year to commence employment with us. We therefore require applicants to have either completed, or be in the process of completing, their bar course with a view to call to the bar taking place in the calendar year in which the application is made.

Why do you ask about the differences between the self-employed bar and the employed bar in your pupillage application form?

DWF Chambers is part of the employed bar and we want to recruit pupils who recognise the benefits of the employed bar and want to pursue their career in that direction. We are looking for thoughtful and considered answers to the questions that are posed in our application form in order to assess whether prospective candidates are genuinely interested in a career at the employed bar.

Is there any flexibility in the office location or practice area offered?

Our specific recruitment needs will be advertised in any pupillage recruitment season. For example, in the 2024 recruitment season we are looking to recruit up to three pupils to cover all of our core practice areas. We are currently flexible as to office location. We are in the process of training pupil supervisors in all of our office locations.

For the right candidate we will always endeavour to be as flexible as possible in relation to base office and practice area. Broadly speaking our barristers operate in

personal injury, commercial insurance, employment, regulatory and costs. We are not able to offer pupillages outside of these core practice areas at present.

Our team are based at offices in Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, London and Manchester and we would expect pupils to be able to access these offices during their pupillage year. We must also consider business need in any recruitment year. However ultimately we are keen to have high quality individuals join our team and we will be as flexible as possible in order to accommodate this.

What is the pay and benefits package for a pupillage at DWF Chambers?

For the 2024 application season the pupillage award is £35,000.

Pupils are also given access to the full range of DWF benefits including paid holiday, pension contributions, access to the annual bonus scheme, health benefits etc.

Pupils are also provided with a mobile phone and laptop and all reasonable travel expenses are covered in line with the DWF Travel Policy.