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## How I secured pupillage

By Marianne Tutin



Marianne Tutin started pupillage at Devereux on October 2014 and became a tenant exactly a year later. Before pupillage, she volunteered for the Free Representation Unit and became its Treasurer. She also gained experience of the interface between policy and politics, having worked for an MP in the House of Commons and for Hanover Communications, a PR firm and public affairs consultancy. She answers a few key questions related to the journey she made to secure a pupillage and shares a few tips.



*How did you build experience in preparation for your pupillage applications?*

First, I focused on practising advocacy and volunteered as an employment representative at FRU to gain real life experience of running a case in a tribunal. I also undertook other pro

bono work at local advice centres and law clinics as a means of helping clients. Debating and mooting were also invaluable ways of learning how to think on my feet and present a case persuasively.

Secondly, I set about gaining more experience in the areas of law in which I was interested. Through researching cases whilst volunteering at FRU, my knowledge of employment law increased considerably. I also kept my knowledge of other areas of law up to date by reading recently published cases and commentary on legislation. There are many websites, blogs and Twitter feeds which are a useful means of keeping up to date, such as the Lexis Current Awareness Update, the UKSC Blog and @DavidAllenGreen. Writing articles can also be a helpful way of learning about a new area of law.

Thirdly, undertaking mini-pupillages at civil and commercial sets is a road well-travelled by most pupillage candidates. While it's not necessary to undertake a mini-pupillage at every set to which you apply, it's a helpful way of learning things about a chambers which you wouldn't pick up from its website, such as its culture, balance between practice areas and the work undertaken by juniors. It also offers you the opportunity to talk to barristers about the advantages and disadvantages related to each practice area.

*How did you decide which chambers to apply to?*

I wanted to apply to high quality sets with expertise in civil and commercial law. Using the Pupillage Gateway, I searched for common law sets specialising in fields in which I had a particular interest and applied to multi-specialist sets because I hadn't made my mind up about the area in which I wished to specialise.

Looking at cases which chambers publicised on their websites gave me a flavour of the quality of their instructions. However, I recognised that this might have been a reflection of a few star members and decided to look further afield; for example, through researching a wider range of cases undertaken by members on Bailii to find out which firms of solicitors had instructed chambers. This can be a useful indicator of the quality of a set.

It's also important to be realistic about the types of chambers to which you apply. I looked at the CVs of recent tenants to decide whether I would be an appropriate fit with chambers. With this in mind, I applied to a range of chambers to increase my chances of securing pupillage.

*How did you find the selection process?*

The application stage was the most competitive stage so I worked hard on my applications and took into consideration a Recruitment Guide produced by the Bar Council. It's important to remember that your answers need to be evidenced by examples, as they are marked against objective criteria. The application forms are an opportunity for written advocacy so answers should be drafted persuasively. After finishing a draft, I

asked friends and family to read my application and give constructive feedback. I also ensured my answers were as succinct as possible: barristers give up their free time to read hundreds of applications so it's important that you make your point quickly and concisely.

*How did you prepare for any interviews?*

I re-read my application form and built up a few points from particular aspects of my CV which I wanted to discuss or I knew were likely to be brought up in discussion. I also read key cases in the areas of chambers' specialities and important judgments involving members of those chambers.

Legal problem questions often form a core component of interviews. I created and memorised 'memory sheets': an A4 page of the key elements of common causes of actions which I applied to problem questions. It's also important when answering legal problem questions to consider the practicalities of your answer and whether any ethical issues might arise.

Finally, chambers are interested in how candidates present their answers and respond to being challenged, which emulates advocacy in front of a court or tribunal. Accordingly, I practised presenting an argument on either side of a debate, focusing on topics involving current affairs or issues which affected the legal profession or market. This was a useful means of ensuring that I was expressing myself cogently and coherently. Only practice makes perfect!



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