

BACFI Student Careers Event Summary

Introduction

The theme of the evening on 17 October was careers advice for aspiring barristers. Some 20% of barristers work in the employed bar. There is tremendous opportunity in the employed bar. The principal employers of barristers are the Crown Prosecution Service, Government Legal Service, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants, large corporate organisations and an increasing number of solicitors' practices.

City Law School Presentation: CV Preparation

The key points were that CVs should:

- Be of no more than two pages in length.
- Should contain evidence of approximately four mini-pupillages.
- Try to ensure you undertake mini-pupillages in areas that compliment your chosen Chamber's core business.
- Try to read the book "the path to pupillage."
- Your CV should show what you have learned from your pupillage and legal experience.
- When drafting your CV try to use the "STAR model." Each sentence should have a verb-noun an outcome demonstrating what you have achieved.
- Look at legal job profiles to help focus your CV.
- Your CV should include your home address and your email contact details.
- Ideally, start with your qualifications, you might want to put your examination grades in bold.
- Include a section detailing your experience of public speaking and debating in your CV.
- Many candidates will need to apply three or four times to Chambers before they are successful. Ideally, contact Chambers to find out what their policy is on repeat applications before you apply again.
- Demonstrate in your application that you have researched the set of Chambers that you are applying for.
- Do not cut-and-paste the content of one application into another.
- Include pro bono work in your CV; this is evidence that you are committed to a legal career.

Bar Council Presentation: 10 Things You Should Know about Pupillage

The key points from the presentation were:

- Pupillage rules are changing in 2019 to allow for different models of delivery of pupillage.
- The new rules will allow for periods of work-based learning.
- Pupil supervisors will be able to supervise more than one pupil. This is an exciting development as it could allow a greater number of pupils to be taken on from 2019, thus potentially reducing the backlog of candidates without pupillage.
- Pupillage will continue to last for a minimum of 12 months.
- It is permissible to complete pupillage part-time. However, pupillage must be within 24 months when undertaken part-time.
- Pupillage providers should not offer a pupil less than 12 months pupillage.

- There will be an increase the minimum pupillage award from £10,000 to £17,000 in London.
- From 1 September 2019, pupils should be assessed in line with the Bar Council Professional Statement at the recruitment stage as well as during pupillage.

Clare Strickland on Behalf of The Nursing and Midwifery Council

- The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) have a pupillage scheme. Please see their website for details as they offer several pupillages each year.
- The NMC do not offer mini-pupillages or work experience. However, individuals wanting to gain experience should come and watch the professional conduct hearings which are open to the public.
- Clare recommends about 2 to 3 mini-pupillages. A large number of pupillages on a candidate's CV looks unattractive.
- Extract the legal skills and competencies that you have gained from nonlegal experience and apply this to the job that you are applying for.
- There is an increasing amount of advocacy that is carried out at the employed bar both in terms of advocacy at professional conduct hearings and in the High Court.
- Professional regulation is a growing area of law, and as such there are many opportunities to gain pupillage and develop a career in this area.

Laurence Fry and Anthony Lavers

In summary:

- Anthony stressed the importance of using your transferable skills in applications for pupillage.
- Academic experience is attractive to employers, as many clients require barristers to provide training.
- Both Laurence and Anthony stressed the benefits of security of income and reasonable working hours at the employed bar.
- Working in the self-employed bar can be unattractive if you have a young family and a mortgage and need a reasonable income.
- Barristers working for large corporate organisations have access to a wide variety of employee benefits which they do not have access to in Chambers.

Sarah Cawley-Wilkinson on behalf of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants

The main points from Sarah's session were:

- Sarah worked in a firm of solicitors when she completed her Bar Vocational Course.
- Determined to make it in law she cross-qualified as a solicitor.
- Because she was dual qualified and gained experience as an advocate in a solicitor's office, she was only required to undertake nine months of pupillage.
- A dual qualification as a solicitor and barrister can be a significant selling point for you.
- Sarah also pointed out that professional regulation is a growth area at the bar.

- Sarah's key message was be open-minded and innovative. One often does not end up doing what you initially intended to in your career. However, it is important to go where the opportunities and the work is if you want to make it as a barrister.

Sonia Hayes

In short, Sonia stated that:

- Paralegal work experience can be invaluable; it is important to seek this out to build your legal CV.
- Networking and meeting people is also very important to open up pupillage opportunities.
- Start networking at the Inns of Court, and this will open up opportunities for you.
- Constantly update your legal skills, spend at least half an hour per day updating your legal skills.
- Try to get a mentor who can provide you with advice and guidance; there are mentoring schemes available at most of the Inns of Court's.
- Always check your spelling and grammar when you submit legal applications. Spelling and grammar are at the core of the work of barristers.
- Preparation is key, always prepare and research the organisation that you are applying to.

Baroness Hale of Richmond — President of the Bar Association for Commerce Finance and Industry.

The key points from Baroness Hale's presentation were:

- Do not be surprised if you fail at first. Baroness Hale said that she failed on several occasions. For example, she failed to get her dream job as a professor.
- The most important thing is to learn from your experience and benefit from your failures.
- Failing in her early career made Baroness Hale much more successful.
- Be innovative, be creative try to be the first in your area of expertise.
- Be strategic; Baroness Hale found that authoring a book on family law led to her appointment as a law Commissioner.
- She was able to use her unique skills to her advantage, at that time the Law Commission were looking for more diversity. They had not yet fully considered the issue of gender diversity or ethnic diversity. Their approach to diversity was to have an academic on the commission which was dominated by lawyers.
- Her work on the Law Commission led to her appointment as a High Court judge.
- She has always been employed and has found being an employee has offered her the security to raise her family.
- Baroness Hale said there are tremendous opportunities to utilise your legal skills in a whole variety of employed areas. For example, there are significant opportunities to use one's legal skills in the Financial Conduct Authority.

Dr Bernard Horsford

18 October 2018