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# Ten tips on how to get a commercial pupillage

Following our webinar on how to secure a commercial pupillage, we have set out our top ten tips for applicants in preparation for the application process, at the application stage, and at interview.

## BEFORE YOU APPLY

- 1. Familiarise yourself with the selection criteria on the website:** The selection criteria on the chambers' website tells you what the chambers is looking for. Ensure that you can demonstrate that you fulfil the criteria at both the application and the interview stage. Review the criteria in advance of the application process to give yourself plenty of time to fill the gaps. [More information on the Twenty Essex selection criteria.](#)
- 2. Gain experience of advocacy:** Advocacy is bread and butter for barristers. Trying it out before you apply is useful for two reasons: it looks good on your application form and, most importantly, it gives you an idea of whether you actually enjoy it. You can try mootng or debating through the Inns, at university, or at law school, or you can try out your skills on some real-life clients by volunteering at the Free Representation Unit.
- 3. Consider doing a mini-pupillage:** Mini-pupillages will give you a good insight into what life at chambers is really like and the opportunity to meet the people that you might be working with during your pupillage year and beyond. [More information on mini-pupillage at Twenty Essex.](#)

## DRAFTING YOUR APPLICATION

4. **Demonstrate an interest in the chambers' practice areas:** Every set wants to know that you understand, and are enthusiastic about, its areas of practice. You can demonstrate your interest in a specific area of law by doing a course at university or law school, reading relevant cases, or even writing a blog or an article on a new development in the field.
5. **Structure your answers:** Make it easy for the person reviewing your application form to select you. Give examples of how you meet each of chambers' selection criteria based on your life and interests, and structure your answers with headings.

## THE WRITTEN PIECE OF WORK

6. **Think through the problem:** You will be asked to write a short response to a legal problem. Spend time reading and re-reading the question, then systematically analyse each of the potential issues. The goal is to demonstrate your analytical skills rather than reciting the law.
7. **Be clear and concise:** When writing out your advice, be organised and succinct. Set out a roadmap for the reader and use headings to structure your response. Cover all of the potential issues that you have considered and ensure that you reach a conclusion on each point.

## THE INTERVIEW

8. **Prepare yourself:** Read over your application form and written work, and consider the kinds of questions that you might be asked. You should have a broad strategy for how you might respond to each question, but avoid rote-learning (it is better to sound natural).
9. **Try to relax:** Remember, no one wants to catch you out! Everyone in the room (or on the screens, if your interview is virtual) has been there themselves and can sympathise with how you might be feeling. With that in mind, stay calm: listen to the questions, allow yourself to pause and think through what you want to say, and don't be afraid to change your mind if you realise that you have made a mistake.

## OUR TOP TIP

10. **Consider getting a mentor:** Mentorship can be a useful way to get feedback and build confidence, particularly in the early stages of your career or if you are considering a career move. If you are eligible, consider signing up to the mentorship programme run by [Bridging the Bar](#), or look into the schemes run by the Inns (schemes are currently run by [Gray's Inn](#), [Inner Temple](#), [Middle Temple](#) and [Lincoln's Inn](#)).

**Authors: Philip Edey QC, Susannah Jones, Mark Tushingham and Maria Kennedy**

Visit our [pupillage page](#) for more information or email [pupillage@twentyessex.com](mailto:pupillage@twentyessex.com).