

SILK & JUDICIAL GUIDE



Bar Mentoring Service



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Foreword



It is important that both the judiciary and the legal profession reflect the society which we serve. The Bar aspires to be a profession of all and for all. Although progress has undoubtedly been made, we still have some way to travel before fulfilling our aim of being a profession for all. The Bar Council is committed to working with the profession to making this aspiration a reality.

As part of our commitment the Bar Council's Bar Mentoring Service launched a Silk and Judicial Appointments Scheme in 2014 to encourage barristers, particularly those from under-represented groups, to make applications for Queen's Counsel and judicial positions.

Having reviewed the scheme, we are now improving the service we offer by revising the Guide and the available resources to better inform participants of the benefits of mentoring, and to provide more assistance to participants to enable them more effectively to benefit from mentoring relationships.

The Bar Mentoring Service's Silk and Judicial Appointments Scheme is intended to be a mutually beneficial process for both mentors and mentees. Previous mentees have found the mentoring offered by the Scheme to be a very useful tool during the application process, and have subsequently volunteered as mentors on other Bar Mentoring Service platforms as a result of their experience. The Bar Council is keen to increase awareness of the Service its availability, and to provide more support for mentor volunteers throughout the process.

This Guide draws on the feedback from previous participants and aims to provide in-depth information on the process, useful guidance on conduct during the mentoring relationship, and clarification of what is expected of participants throughout the process.

I encourage readers of this Guide to participate in our mentoring scheme and wish all those considering applying for Queen's Counsel or a judicial post every success.

Chantal-Aimée Doerries QC

Chairman of the Bar of England and Wales

The Bar Council

Mentor Application Form

Bar Mentoring Service



Silk & Judicial Mentor: Application Form

Please complete both sides of this application form

PLEASE NOTE: information provided on the application form will be published on the website to assist mentees during the application process. Confidential information will not be published online, or disseminated to mentees once matched.

Full Name:					
Chambers:					
Primary Court:					
Circuit:					
Area(s) of Practice:					
Membership(s):					
Year of Call:					
Year of Silk:					
Year of Judicial Appointment:					
Which competition application are you willing to provide assistance with? (please tick)					
Silk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Judicial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is your preferred method of communication? (please tick)					
Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Face to Face	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biography					
Please provide a brief biography (no more than 250 words) which includes the following:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of your career including career highlights; • Previous mentoring experience and/ or training; 					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background and experience which you consider might be useful for a potential mentee (e.g. if you have taken a career break, overcome discrimination at the Bar for any particular reason, or managed an illness whilst at the Bar) • Any other information which you consider relevant 		
Confidential Information		
Contact telephone number:		
Contact email address:		
Please indicate the number of mentoring relationships you are prepared to undertake at any one time:	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you participated in a mentoring programme before?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes,	Mentor <input type="checkbox"/>	Mentee <input type="checkbox"/>
(Please provide further details)		
I declare that the information on this form is accurate and true, and that any false or misleading information may lead to the offer of a mentoring role being withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please tick to confirm you have read and agreed the Terms and Conditions of the Bar Mentoring Scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Please email: Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk

Please note: although electronic copies are preferred (and can be downloaded from the Bar Council website), hard copy application forms can be sent via post, addressed to:

**The Bar Mentoring Service – Silk and Judicial Appointments Scheme,
The Bar Council,
289-293 High Holborn,
London,
WC1V 7HZ**

Background

1. Research has identified the positive benefits of mentoring, or career coaching, in promoting self-evaluation, one-to-one developmental assistance, and encouraging career progression.
2. With a clear objective, The Bar Mentoring Service – Silk and Judicial Appointments Scheme – was developed by the Bar Council in 2014 to support barristers in practice seeking to make applications for Silk or Judicial positions.
3. The Scheme is available to all members of the Bar, and is intended to support progression for all, within the profession.
4. To reflect the Bar Council's commitment to promoting diversity within the profession and the Judiciary, The Scheme encourages applications from members of under-represented groups e.g. women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) barristers, and barristers from non-traditional backgrounds.
5. Further information about The Scheme is available on the Bar Council website: <http://www.barcouncil.org.uk/supporting-the-bar/bar-mentoring-service/silk-and-judicial-appointments/>.

“one of the most important professional relationships I have ever had”


HHJ Mukherjee

Purpose

6. The Scheme is designed to provide a safe and open environment for barristers to:
 - a. Learn about the competition process;
 - b. Identify barriers (personal and professional) inhibiting career progression;
 - c. Identify areas of development required to make a successful application;
 - d. Learn and adopt the skills and experience necessary to support and succeed in applications to silk and judicial office;
 - e. Network and interact with a Senior practitioner with a greater understanding of the process and profession;
 - f. Receive confidential advice, support and guidance from a Senior practitioner (Silk or Judge).

“[My Mentor] gave me the confidence to apply and ensure that I had the right criteria” **Grace Ong**

Mentor Biography Example



The Bar Council

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BARCO

Bar Mentoring Service

- Silk and Judicial appointments
 - How it works
 - Applications & Guidance
 - Becoming a Mentor
 - Becoming a Mentee
 - Eligibility Criteria
- List of Mentors
 - Jane Smith

e-Mentoring

General Mentoring Scheme

Bar Representation Fee and funding

Conferences, training and other events

Consultation

Equality and diversity

Ethical Enquiries Service

Explore member benefits

Fees Collection

International

Member Services

Member Services training courses

Meeting Spaces & Conference Facilities for Hire

New to the Bar

Parental Support Hub

Practising requirements

Wellbeing at the Bar

Young Bar

Her Honour Judge Sharma QC

I was called to the Bar in 1991, and began a mixed practice in Birmingham in 1993. As one of the only ethnic minority females in Chambers, I struggled with establishing my practice, and my voice within Chambers. Undeterred, I applied for Silk and was unsuccessful two times before assistance from an informal mentor in Chambers. His unwavering belief in my ability, and hands-down approach, meant that my third application was thoroughly edited before its successful submission. As a result of his careful career guidance and advice, I am happy to say I had a successful career as a QC, and was appointed as a Circuit Judge in 2011.

My experience sitting as a Diversity and Community Relations Judge made me even more passionate about advocating for equality and diversity within the profession and judiciary. I encourage

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Mentor Eligibility

7. The Scheme is open to members of the Queen's Counsel i.e. Silk, and Judges, who have:
 - a. recent experience (preferably in the last 10 years) of the competition process;
 - b. an understanding of the requirements for competition applications; and
 - c. a schedule permitting frequent contact with the mentee, as agreed from the outset.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR?

Private & Confidential

Understands that all information shared in the mentoring relationship is confidential. Builds and sustains an environment of trust with mentee.

Guide & Assist

Creates a positive learning environment by encouraging open discussion, regular advice and guidance to the mentee.

Goal-Driven

Agrees a clear purpose and sets attainable goals and obligations from the outset.

Flexible

Willing and able to adapt to change, and accommodate the needs, concerns and obligations of the mentee or situation.

Listen

Makes an effort to understand the mentee's concerns, and develops a strategy to manage expectations of the outcome of competition applications.

Network

Makes use of their professional network, and offers mentee opportunities to broaden experience or understanding.

Committed

Available and committed to maintaining a successful mentoring relationship.

Time

Sets out a timetable from the outset, making sure to increase the pace of communication on highlighted key dates.

Transferable Knowledge

Uses personal and professional experiences to inform information and advice.

Equality

Understands the mentoring relationship is of mutual benefit, by cultivating an equal partnership founded on mutual respect.

Prepare

Understands the impact of a good mentoring relationship, and takes the time to research before providing advice

Check-In

Regularly assesses progress by reviewing issues or circumstances to improve or meet mentee's desired outcome.

Mentee Eligibility

8. The Scheme is open to members of the profession who have aspirations to attain Silk or Judicial appointment within the current competition process, or within the next 18 months.
9. Mentee applicants are advised to pay attention to the requirements for competition applications. It is hoped that participants will further develop (although it is anticipated that some may already have) the following over the course of the mentoring relationship:
 - a. a current practising certificate in England and Wales;
 - b. rights of audience in higher courts;
 - c. evidence of efforts to maintain a high standard of current affairs and legal knowledge in stated practice area and wider profession;
 - d. excellent written and oral advocacy skills;
 - e. at least three written referees.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTEE?

Private & Confidential

Understands that all information shared in the mentoring relationship is confidential, and makes an effort to share goals, challenges and fears with mentor.

Driver

Drives the mentoring relationship by understanding its impact on professional development and articulating identified goals and needs to mentor.

Equality

Understands status as an equal party in the mentoring relationship, and that both opinions are valid. Open to advice, but prepared to challenge if the need arises, and do so respectfully.

Listen

Listens and takes adequate notes of the advice and information given by the mentor.

Committed

Committed to maintaining a successful mentoring relationship, and sustains it by regular communication.

Time

Adheres to the agreed timetable, and frequency of contact.

Absorb

Accepts gaps in knowledge, and willing to learn from mentor. Open to feedback and advice given by mentor, and prompts by regularly asking questions.

Act

Takes action once a strategy has been agreed, and make sure to feedback to mentor about its outcome.

Q&A

Regularly makes use of the mentoring relationship by preparing questions beforehand, and asking mentor, in line with agreed timetable.

Prepare

Understands that mentors are volunteers, so make the best use of their time by preparing beforehand before scheduled meetings.

“mentoring has a major role to play in helping to rebalance the silk system and to achieve a broader range of successful candidates”

Chris Daw QC

Process

10. [Mentor](#) and [Mentee](#) application forms are available on the Bar Council website. Alternatively, you can contact the Bar Council directly to request an application form, and additional information about the scheme, by contacting: Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk.
11. Completed application forms should be sent back to the Bar Council by email Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk. Alternatively, hard copy application forms can be sent via post, addressed to: **The Bar Mentoring Service – Silk and Judicial Appointments Scheme, Bar Council, 289-293 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7HZ.**
12. Mentor applicants:
 - a. will be asked to provide a short summary of their career experience and provide background information of individual circumstances. This biography will be published and included in the Mentor’s public profile on the Bar Council website (please see example above). The information is intended to assist potential mentees identify their preferred mentor based on their needs, interests, practice area and background;
 - b. will need to confirm details submitted before we publish the biography on the website;
 - c. will be contacted about whether the application was successful, or whether further biographical information is required;
 - d. will only be contacted again when a potential mentee expresses an interest in being matched.
13. Mentee applicants:
 - a. Will be asked to provide a short summary of their career experience and provide background information of individual circumstances. This summary will be sent to the mentor to scope his/ her capacity to assist;
 - b. are contacted to confirm successful submission of the application form;

- c. will be contacted again if they have been successfully matched with a mentor at the Bar Mentoring Scheme's discretion (please see Terms and Conditions on pages 21-22).
14. Once matched, mentors and mentees are provided with the contact details and short biography of their match, to assist with creating common ground when initiating contact.
 15. Training documents and guides will be duly provided, to assist with familiarisation with the mentoring process.
 16. It is advised that the mentor and mentee should initiate contact within 14 working days of being matched. If your match has not contacted you within the stated time, please contact the Bar Mentoring Scheme via email: Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk.

Data Protection

17. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Bar Council and the Bar Mentoring Scheme will keep all personal information submitted private and confidential.
18. Agreed background information submitted on the mentor application will be published on the website.
19. Confidential information i.e. personal contact details, are clearly marked on application forms, and will not be published online.
20. Disclosure of private and confidential information of any applicant is strictly prohibited.
21. Mentors and mentees must act in accordance with The Scheme's Terms and Conditions (please see pages 21-22), and details shared in correspondence must be treated as confidential, unless non-disclosure would put your match at risk.
22. If you feel uncomfortable or are worried about the wellbeing of your match as a result of information disclosed, please contact the Bar Mentoring Service via email: Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk

“Mentoring is a means of “pass[ing] on some of the help and advice that I have been lucky enough to receive over the years”

Nicholas Hilliard QC

Tips

23. There are a variety of ways to communicate e.g. via email, over the telephone, or face-to-face at a mutually agreed public location.

24. The Scheme does not prescribe a particular style of mentoring. The style is at the discretion of the mentor and mentee, and the mentor's preferences are listed on their public profiles to assist in the mentee's selection process.
25. Initial contact with your mentor and mentee is very important, and sets the tone for your mentoring relationship. Take the time to introduce yourself, ask about the preferred frequency of communication, and be sure to not assume anything prior to being informed by your match. Also, explain your motives behind participating in the scheme, and what you hope to achieve by the end of your mentoring relationship.
26. The mentor is not bound by the mode of communication preference stated online, and is at liberty to alter the style of communication, once agreed with the mentee. For example, an email correspondence could later lead to a face-to-face meeting at a coffee shop, or joint attendance at a Specialist Bar Association function that will be of benefit to the mentee.
27. As part of your mentoring relationship, please bear in mind the importance of listening. It not only shows your mentee that you are paying attention, but also, that are you taking an active interest in their progress and general wellbeing. Encourage your mentee to talk, and give them space to do so. Do not dominate the conversation, rather, allow the mentee to air their views and concerns first, before giving advice.

CHECKLIST – INITIATION OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Contact Details

Ensure you have provided the mentor/ mentee with your current and active contact details.

Experience

State professional and personal experience, any challenges faced, and what more could be achieved through the mentoring relationship.

Frequency

Agree the frequency of communication from the outset.

Key Dates

Highlight any key dates for application deadlines, face-to-face meetings, scheduled holidays, or professional networking opportunities.

Network

Understands the significance of an active professional network, and highlight opportunities to broaden network.

Duration

Set out a timetable from the outset, and outline how long the mentoring relationship can feasibly be maintained.

Style

State your preferred style of communication, but express your willingness to be flexible where the need arises.

Confidentiality

State obligation to maintain a confidential relationship, and outline boundaries.

Goals

Set realistic goals with a deadline attached.

“Being there to listen and helping a mentee to work out what they want to achieve and planning to bring about that change”

DDJ Frank Winslett

Time

28. The Scheme is setup to facilitate a formal mentoring relationship in the time preceding a competition application. The default duration for a mentoring relation is 2 years, but mentors and mentees are at liberty to tailor the length of the mentoring relationship to a timeline better suited.
29. The Bar Council will periodically evaluate (please see page 21) the progress of the mentoring relationship on a quarterly basis for 2 years, after which facilitation of the mentoring relationship will cease.
30. The Scheme does not prescribe the frequency of contact for mentoring relationships. The frequency of contact is at the discretion of the mentor and mentee.
31. The Bar Council advises mentors and mentees to initiate contact within 14 working days of being matched.
32. If your mentor or mentee has not contacted you within the stated time, please contact the Bar Mentoring Scheme via email: Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk
33. It is anticipated that the frequency of contact may vary over the course of the mentoring relationship. The Scheme advises that the frequency of contact is discussed in advance, in line with the competition timetable, paying particular attention to deadlines and interview dates.
34. In order to manage expectations, The Scheme advises that mentors and mentees state the proposed duration and frequency of contact from the outset, once initial contact is initiated.

Training

35. The Scheme offers periodic mentor training sessions. The training sessions normally take place once a year, in the evening, to avoid conflict with work obligations.
36. Mentor applicants who are unable to attend the training session will be provided with the notes from the training sessions, upon successful completion of the application process.
37. The Training Session will illustrate common ethical issues mentees have shared with mentors in the past, and create an open forum for discussing best practice.
38. During the training session, mentors are given the opportunity to ask questions about the mentoring relationship in practice, and further enquire about the process from previous mentors.

39. It is hoped that the Scheme will be a mutually beneficial learning experience, and the training provided will assist mentors in developing good relationships with their mentees.

Evaluation

40. The Bar Mentoring Service will contact you quarterly until the termination of the mentoring relationship to enquire about the progress of your mentoring relationship.
41. Feedback is collected, either via email or telephone, from both mentors and mentees.
42. Feedback is beneficial in ensuring The Scheme provides the best assistance, support, and advice to mentors and mentees over the course of the mentoring relationship.
43. Once the mentoring relationship is terminated, the mentor and mentee should inform The Scheme. The mentor and mentee will then have the opportunity to share any feedback on their experience.

Terms and Conditions

44. The Scheme will be administered by the Bar Council, and it is at the Bar Council's discretion to match mentor and mentees.
45. Each mentor is only permitted to assist two mentees concurrently, and The Scheme would prefer for mentors not to assist any other participants until the termination of existing mentoring relationships.
46. Each mentee can only be assisted by one Bar Mentoring Service mentor during each competition application process.
47. In the event that the Bar Council is unable to allocate a mentor to a particular mentee, that mentee's name will be placed on a waiting list until a suitable mentor with sufficient capacity to assist has been identified.
48. The Bar Council will consider a mentee's stated preferences, but is under no obligation to match participants, if the requested mentor is unavailable.
49. Mentors are unpaid volunteers of The Scheme, and will advise, inform, and assist mentees in so far as their skills and experience permit.
50. There is no charge for mentees to participate in The Scheme. The only cost to you will be your time, and perhaps the attendance of events or meetings, as agreed with your match.
51. Mentors are not trained counsellors, therapists or career advisers, and can only assist to the extent their experience and knowledge permits.
52. Mentors are not permitted to draft competition applications on behalf of their mentee, but can assist as far as their experience and knowledge permits.

53. Mentors are not bound by, and do not commit to a long-term professional relationship with the mentee.
54. Participation in The Scheme does not confer preferential status in any competition, and cannot guarantee success.
55. The Bar Council is not responsible for any advice, information or assistance imparted to mentees, but the Bar Mentoring Service will encourage a high standard of communication throughout the course of the mentoring relationship.
56. Mentors and mentees are asked to provide periodic feedback to the Bar Council (please see page 21) about the progress and quality of the mentoring relationship and support received.
57. The Bar Council will consider removing a current participant from The Scheme:
 - a. if a participant fails to adhere to all guidelines and regulations for good conduct and practice as set out in this guide;
 - b. if the participant fails to maintain contact with their match, and does not provide The Bar Council with a reasonable explanation;
 - c. if the participant fails to maintain friendly, courteous, and professional communication with their match;
 - d. if The Bar Council discovers erroneous information was submitted at the application stage.but in any case, only after:
 - a. reasonable efforts have been made to contact the participant and rectify the situation;
 - b. giving the participant a reasonable opportunity to make representations;
 - c. giving written notice to the participant of grounds on which their participation on The Scheme will be revoked.
58. If the competition application is unsuccessful, the mentee applicant is permitted to apply no more than three times in total, to be further assisted in future competition applications.
59. Both the mentor and mentee will keep confidential any information that is received or obtained during the period of the mentoring relationship that is identified as or would be reasonably expected to be confidential.

FAQs

What should I say when I initiate contact with my mentor?

Express your objectives, preferred duration and frequency for the mentoring relationship, and fears or professional challenges faced in your career thus far.

I have initiated contact, but I am yet to receive a reply, what should I do?

Initial contact should be made within 14 working days of being matched. If your match fails to reply within the stated time, please contact the Bar Mentoring Service via email: Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk

Can I contact my mentor or mentee via social media e.g. LinkedIn or Facebook?

The Bar Mentoring Service advises for contact to remain professional during the course of the formal mentoring relationship. It is at the discretion of the mentor and mentee whether or not to connect via social media. This is a matter that can be discussed when contact is initiated, and can be revisited at any time throughout the course of the mentoring relationship (please see Terms and Conditions on pages 21-22 for further details).

My mentor/ mentee is not adhering to the agreed frequency of contact. What should I do?

First and foremost, contact the Bar Mentoring Service via email (Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk) and report the conduct of your match. In addition, the Bar Mentoring Service periodically evaluates the progress of mentoring relationships, and participants can include any such concerns when providing feedback on their experience.

Is it acceptable to give my mentor a gift as a token of my appreciation?

Yes, but you should carefully consider whether the circumstances and size of the gift would reasonably be appreciated by your mentor in light of the support and assistance you have received. If you feel like the size of the gift would embarrass your mentor, then you are advised to refrain from gifting your mentor, as this could deter future participation in The Scheme.

I do not think my mentee should make a competition application yet. What should I do?

Try to communicate your concerns in a caring manner, pointing out attainable goals and areas of development worth pursuing before making an application in future. Highlight that it is ultimately the mentee's decision to make, but your advice is to follow the steps outlined and apply at a later time.

Can I discuss personal issues with my mentor?

The emphasis of The Scheme is on supporting career development, but there is scope to discuss personal issues.

How do I express the adversities I have personally faced with a mentor who has had no experience of this?

Try not to make assumptions prior to communicating your concerns. Speak openly and honestly about your circumstances, and be receptive to your mentor's advice. Mentors are at liberty to share advice from their personal experience, but also experiences from their professional network.

Is it acceptable to approach my mentor informally in court?

Informal contact is at the discretion of the mentor and mentee to decide. Bear in mind the nature of your relationship, and the agreed means of communication expressed from the outset of the mentoring relationship.

How do I terminate the mentoring relationship before the agreed time?

If you would like to conclude your mentoring relationship, please contact the Bar Mentoring Service: Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk.

My competition application was unsuccessful, what should I say to my mentor?

Do not feel ashamed or embarrassed if your application is unsuccessful. Be open and honest about your disappointment, and be willing to listen to your mentor's response. Your mentor will understand, and may further advise you on the steps necessary to achieve a better outcome if you decide to reapply. Please note the default period of 2 years for the facilitation of a mentoring relationship by the Bar Mentoring Service. If you are interested in reapplying to The Scheme, you will need to reapply as per the process stated on pages 17-18.

I work primarily outside England and Wales. Can I still participate in The Scheme?

Yes. Through the use of technology, there is no real need to live or work in the same location as your match. E-Mentoring or maintaining a mentoring relationship over the telephone can also deliver the same result as traditional face-to-face forms of mentoring. This offers the benefit of correspondence to be considered beforehand, before advice is given. It may also be ideal where an urgent issue arises and it is important to deal with it immediately. Rather than waiting for a scheduled meeting, mentors and mentees can resolve the issue over email or telephone.

Useful Contact Details and Information

The Bar Mentoring Service: Mentoring@BarCouncil.org.uk

Bar Standards Board: 0207 831 9217 or www.barstandardsboard.org.uk

Judicial Appointments Commission: www.jac.judiciary.gov.uk/

Email: jaas@jac.gsi.gov.uk Tel: +44 (0) 203 334 0123

Queen's Counsel Appointments: <http://www.qcappointments.org/>

Email: enquiries@qcapplications.org.uk Tel: +44 (0) 207 831 0020

The Bar Standards Board's Handbook Equality and Diversity Rules:

www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-bar-standards-board/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-rules-of-the-bsb-handbook/