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**Pupillage Information Guidance Note**

Richmond Chambers LLP is pleased to be offering up to Richmond Chambers LLP is pleased to offer up to 3 immigration pupillages commencing in October 2022 and up to 1 further immigration pupillage commencing in October 2023.

**Who we are**

Richmond Chambers is a multi-award winning partnership of specialist immigration barristers. Based in the heart of Covent Garden, we’re a barrister-only immigration law practice, combining the expertise, quality and flexibility of the Bar, with the service delivery and benefits package of a boutique law firm.

Authorised by the SRA as the UK’s first barrister-led ABS in July 2013, we were subsequently awarded ‘Best Emerging Firm’ at the MPF Awards for Management Excellence and ‘ABS of the Year’ at the Modern Law Awards. Our continuing success has seen us grow to a team of 15 specialist immigration barristers (of whom 9 completed pupillage in Chambers) and 2 pupils, supported by 11 legal associates and 4 business professionals.

**What we do**

We do everything that barristers traditionally do - and a whole lot more.

Just as in a traditional Chambers, our barristers are instructed by solicitors and OISC representatives to provide advice, representation and advocacy in relation to all aspects of personal and business immigration law.

But direct access work forms the mainstay of our practice. We like to get involved with our clients’ cases at an early stage and work with them to identify the relevant legal issues and shape the outcomes.

Our immigration barristers assist individuals with the full range of personal immigration matters, including immigration by investment, family migration, skilled migration, student migration, free movement of EEA nationals and their family members, nationality and human rights law.

Our barristers also provide employers and corporate clients with a range of essential business immigration services. We’re regularly instructed directly by businesses in matters involving sponsor licensing, work and business visas for employees and advice on compliance management.

We assist our direct access clients through all stages of the immigration process, from preparing visa applications to enter and remain in the UK, through to providing representation at appeals before the immigration tribunal and higher courts.

**How we work**

Due to our unique structure, we’re able to combine the distinctive tradition and unique selling points of the Bar with a modern dynamic business environment.

We share the same commitment to expertise, quality and ethical standards as barristers in more traditional sets. Several of our barristers practised at the self-employed Bar before deciding to move to Richmond Chambers and we recruit only the most exceptional candidates who are committed to upholding the highest standards of the profession.

And, just as at the self-employed Bar, our employed barristers are independent experts and enjoy complete freedom to advise and act autonomously, without any constraints.

Unlike in many traditional chambers though, our barristers are very much a team rather than a collection of individuals. Our working culture is inclusive and collaborative and we enjoy working together for our clients. At the same time, our managing partners provide a strategic decision-making capacity that ensures that things get done.

Our barristers have complete control over the work they take on, and the flexibility to work how and where they choose to. We receive a high number of enquiries from private clients every day, spanning the full range of personal and business immigration matters, as well as solicitor instructions. We operate a pool system, whereby barristers have access, via an online portal, to new enquiries that come into Chambers. The ‘cab-rank rule’ does not apply to us, and this complete flexibility means that our barristers are able to choose the work that best suits their experience, interests and availability.

Our barristers are supported by a team of legal associates and professional administrators who ensure that our barristers are able to provide a consistently high level of service delivery directly to our clients. Legal associates are available to assist with legal tasks ranging from taking notes at conferences and court hearings, to taking and drafting witness statements, preparing bundles, legal research and drafting. Meanwhile, our team of professional administrators, all of whom are experienced in working directly with the public, deliver a seamless non-traditional ‘clerking’ service.

Our focus on direct access work means that there’s no such thing as a last minute brief and, because all our work is conducted on an agreed fee basis with fees paid in advance, our barristers have no aged debt.

We embrace new technology wherever this enables us to work more effectively and flexibly. Every barrister is provided with an Apple Imac and Apple MacBook Pro notebook, to use and work where and when their schedule dictates. We also maintain a modern, comfortable and well equipped hub in Chambers, in the centre of Covent Garden. This is a place where barristers can work in a collaborative team environment and share knowledge and ideas, when they wish to do so. Our cloud based case management and document sharing systems, combined with video conferencing technology, facilitate working directly with clients around the world and ensure that remote working is possible.

*“Having practised at the traditional bar for 15 years I was excited at the opportunity to join a forward thinking and modern set. I was welcomed by a friendly, dynamic, caring and hardworking team. Clients are always well served and excellent and consistent results are achieved through hard work and dedication. I knew immediately on joining that I had made the right decision and am excited to be part of an innovative set who are leading the way forward.”*

Alexandra Pease, Immigration Barrister

**Pupillage**

Our pupillages are offered on an employed basis, full time and for twelve months. During the twelve months each pupil is allocated to one or more pupil supervisors, but our pupils also have regular opportunities to work for other members of Chambers.

Pupils see a wide range of private client immigration law work including applications, appeals and judicial reviews involving investment migration, business migration, family migration, skilled worker migration, EEA free movement, nationality, human rights and asylum. Our focus on direct access work means that pupils can expect daily client contact.

The pupillage year is structured into two six month periods. The first six months is spent collaborating on a wide range of applications and appeals across all areas of personal and business immigration law, often involving complex and novel points of law. In the second six months, learning through experience continues, but the reputation of Richmond Chambers is such that our pupils can also expect to be briefed by both solicitors and members of the public in their own right.

We are committed to providing our pupils with high quality, relevant training. Our barristers provide regular feedback to our pupils in relation to all work undertaken under their supervision and we hold monthly in-house advocacy training. We also go beyond the Bar Council’s training requirements and provide the additional training that we deem necessary for a successful direct access practice.

We believe that pupillage should be about learning and gaining experience. Richmond Chambers’ pupils are not required to undertake any competitive advocacy exercises or complete any formal assessments. Nor do we require our pupils to compete against each other. We evaluate each person individually based on merit.

We are committed to recruiting new members from our pupils, after evaluation against our standards of excellence. Our recruitment and training processes are such that in the last 3 years all pupils have been offered and accepted membership of chambers at the end of their pupillage. We continue to support our new members in the early years of practice.

We offer each pupil a salary package of £25,000 plus additional benefits, including 28 days paid holiday, interest free travel loan, expenses (including practising certificate fee), funding of compulsory pupillage courses required by the Bar Standards Board, a contribution towards CPD courses, access to our Chambers pension and health insurance schemes, and other benefits in kind. Both salary and benefits can be expected to increase substantially upon successful completion of pupillage.

*“Richmond Chambers stands out from other immigration firms I have worked at due to the collegiate atmosphere and its unwavering commitment to achieving the best results for clients. Having started as a legal associate, I have had the opportunity to work closely with all of the barristers and have been pleasantly surprised at how generous each of them are with their time, guidance and advice. This has continued throughout pupillage, during which I have been encouraged to develop my own knowledge, skills and confidence. While hard work is expected, it is also valued. I have often been shooed out of Chambers in the evening, and professional and personal successes are recognised and celebrated both inside and outside of working hours.“*

Zarina Rahman, Immigration Barrister

**Life after pupillage**We do expect high standards from our pupils and barristers. However, all pupils who reach the high standards that we set for ourselves will benefit from the security of an employed position upon successful completion of pupillage. Compensation packages can be tailored to individual needs and circumstances, but newly qualified barristers typically enjoy the following:

* Guaranteed basic salary paid monthly
* Additional annual salary payment based on receipts
* No aged debt
* 30 days paid holiday per year, in addition to bank holidays
* Unlimited unpaid leave
* Flexible working
* 6 weeks paid sabbatical leave (every 5 years)
* Practising certificate fee paid
* Professional insurance fee paid
* CPD training costs paid
* Membership of ILPA, EIN and Free Movement paid
* Practitioner texts purchased
* Pension scheme
* Private medical insurance scheme
* Interest free season ticket and travel card loans
* Cycle to work scheme

**Who should apply?**

We look for pupils with excellent academic ability and a high level of motivation.

We normally look for at least a 2:1 degree or other evidence of academic ability. In addition, candidates should be able to demonstrate a commitment to the Bar, an impressive academic or employment history, and an interest in our specialist area of work.

Our successful candidates tend to be confident, articulate and interesting individuals with the right aptitude for working directly with members of the public.

Neither undertaking a mini-pupillage with us or employment as a legal associate are prerequisites for a successful pupillage application.
 *“For an aspiring immigration barrister such as myself, there could have been no better choice for pupillage than Richmond Chambers. The opportunity to delve deeply into all aspects of immigration law alongside expert practitioners in the field is unparalleled and ensures an excellent training ground for budding immigration barristers. Upon joining, it became apparent to me that chambers’ unique collegial atmosphere is not simply welcoming and motivational – the thorough exchange of thoughts and ideas amongst the set’s barristers is key to the high standard of legal services it offers.”*

Alex Papasotiriou, Immigration Barrister

**Equality and Diversity**

We encourage applications from candidates from all backgrounds, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, or disability.

**Details of how to apply:**

Richmond Chambers does not use the Pupillage Gateway System to process applications.

Applications should be made using our Pupillage Application Form available on our website at [www.richmondchambers.com](http://www.richmondchambers.com). The form must be completed electronically and emailed to our Chambers administrator, Summer Robson at summer.robson@richmondchambers.com by Wednesday 9th February 2022 at 2pm, along with any correspondence from the BSB confirming any dispensations from pupillage. We will not accept hard copy applications or consider any other material provided. Applicants are advised to read this guidance note and our selection criteria carefully.

We will acknowledge all applications and write to each applicant after the closing date to inform them of whether their application has progressed through to the next stage, or whether their application was unsuccessful. Due to the high number of applications likely to be received, we will be unable to provide feedback on unsuccessful applications. Any applicant that reaches the interview and assessment stages will have the opportunity to attend an in depth feedback session with one of our recruitment panel members.

**Further Information**

If you have any questions, please contact our Chambers administrator, Summer Robson, at summer.robson@richmondchambers.com