

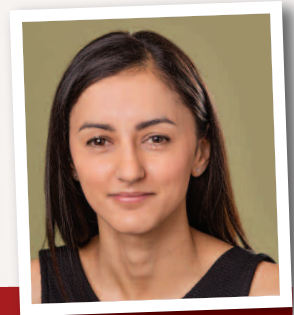
The pupil experience

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Degree subject *Law*

Current position and areas of practice *Junior tenant
practising Commercial Chancery Law*



Why Maitland?

I was initially interested in Maitland because it has such a strong reputation for commercial chancery work, and I particularly liked the fact that chambers has expertise across the whole spectrum of matters which arise in this context. Pupils inevitably get to experience that range by sitting with four pupil supervisors over the course of the year.

What really convinced me to apply for pupillage was spending some time in chambers as a mini-pupil. Mini-pupillages at Maitland are not compulsory or assessed, but they afford a good opportunity to get a feel for the working environment here. I remember being struck by how down-to-earth and welcoming everyone was, staff and barristers alike.

The application process

Chambers is not a member of the Pupillage Gateway and has its own application form, for which the deadline is around mid-January.

Chambers selects 20 to 30 applicants for first round interviews, which are typically conducted by three members of chambers and consist of a range of general questions. Second round interviews are longer, take place before around five members of chambers and focus on a case study. Although both rounds involve questions which raise legal issues, allowance is made for the fact that not all applicants will have completed a law degree – and in fact chambers has a strong record of recruiting pupils and tenants who

studied other subjects as undergraduates.

Pupillage and the tenancy decision I felt confident that chambers selection process, for both pupillage and tenancy, was fair. Maitland holds its applicants to a high standard, but the standard is an objective one. Pupils are not (and are never made to feel like they are) in competition with each other. I also thought it was good that chambers does not consider the matter of tenancy until around July, as this gives pupils a decent amount of time to learn and develop before a decision is made. It is made clear to pupils at the outset that no one expects them to be the finished article from day one, and the first 10 weeks are treated as a settling-in period.

From around February there is a string of formal advocacy exercises which take the form of mock hearings before a senior member of chambers. A couple of other members of chambers are present at all of the exercises to give constructive feedback and help pupils to improve from one occasion to the next. On a day-to-day basis pupils undertake written work (drafting and research) for their pupil supervisors and are given feedback on this as and when appropriate. The work done by a pupil is regulated by their pupil supervisor – so there is no danger of finding yourself overwhelmed with tasks from a number of members of chambers.

As a rule pupils are not expected to work late or at weekends: my typical working hours were 9.30am to 6.30pm.

Support

Chambers is a friendly place and pupils are made to feel welcome if they choose to attend social events, which include tea every afternoon, drinks with members of chambers on Thursdays and in the clerks' room on Fridays, as well as Christmas and summer parties.

During my time here I have always found members of chambers of all levels of seniority to be very generous with their time and wisdom whenever I have had a question or problem. I think having that kind of support is invaluable when starting out in this profession.

Life as a junior tenant

Pupillage at Maitland is non-practising, except that occasionally pupils might pick up a case or two towards the very end of the year. However I felt that I had a good amount of exposure to the kind of work done at the junior end and was sufficiently prepared to take on my own cases when I started practice: the advocacy exercises are based on actual cases encountered by junior tenants, and over the summer pupils are encouraged to tag along to hearings with junior members so that they can gain pressure-free experience of typical cases. As a junior tenant I have been in court an average of once or twice per week, and have also been kept busy working as a junior to more senior members of chambers on larger matters.