

Women at the Commercial Bar Mentoring Scheme
Guidelines for assessing applications

1. This scheme is primarily aimed at helping people who are interested in the commercial bar feel more comfortable and confident in pursuing it as a career, by providing information, guidance, empathy and skills training.
2. Mentees may be at an early stage of their studies, and the usual mini-pupillage or pupillage application assessment guidelines are therefore not appropriate to these applications. For example, we should not expect successful applicants to necessarily have advocacy experience.
3. That said, we should focus our resources on those who are, or have the capacity to become, realistic applicants for pupillage at the commercial bar. Points to identify in applications are:
 - (1) Evidence of intellectual excellence (for undergraduate applicants this could be A/A*s at A-Level or 1sts or high 2.1s in university results so far), or at least an improving trajectory that seems to have the potential to end in excellent results.
 - (2) Evidence that the applicant has worked hard and excelled at something that takes commitment and focus over time.
 - (3) High-quality writing in the long answer.
 - (4) Sensible, compelling and well thought through reasons for applying to the scheme given in the long answer.
4. We should not, except in exceptional circumstances, take applicants who do not demonstrate at least three of the above in their applications. Applications should be marked 3 (definitely accept), 2 (possibly accept) or 1 (definitely do not accept).
5. Although we particularly welcome applications from those under-represented at the Commercial Bar, such applications should not be given a higher score for that reason alone. However, assessors should be mindful of how applicants' individual circumstances may have affected their achievements so far, particularly when considering points (1) and (2) in paragraph 3 above.

6. Following initial assessments by individual assessors, there will be a moderation to ensure that similar standards are being applied, and to determine the final set of successful applicants. The means of determining the final set will depend on the number of applicants and the general standard, which we cannot now predict.