



The Pupillage Gateway – why bother?

A presentation to the Chancery Bar Association, November 2017

Introduction

The Pupillage Gateway was launched in 2013, following a period of unsatisfactory performance by the Bar Council's previous pupillage applications provider, through a system called OLPAS.

The intention behind Pupillage Gateway was that it should be a system owned and designed by and for the Bar, which would act only in the interests of members of the Bar recruiting students and those students (as opposed to acting in the interests of the provider, which was a hallmark of the previous system).

From the outset, members of the Bar Council Education and Training Committee sought to ensure that the new Gateway should include features that enabled participating students and pupillage training organisations to achieve best practice in recruitment. The Gateway was developed for the Bar Council by Jobsgopublic, a respected organisation with vast experience in recruitment.

Although the Gateway has been taken up enthusiastically by many Combar sets¹, Chancery sets have proved to be resistant to participation. The purpose of this presentation is for us to describe some of the key features of the Pupillage Gateway, with a view to persuading your Chambers to use the Gateway in preference to your own recruitment procedures. Equally, if there are aspects of the system that could be improved in order for your set to participate, we should be very grateful to hear from you.

This Guide concludes with some comments from those sets which subscribe to the Gateway.

¹ Fountain Court, Brick Court Chambers, 7 Kings Bench Walk, One Essex Court – the list goes on.



The Pupillage Gateway – useful features for best practice

The features of the Pupillage Gateway which we consider will be of most interest to those Chambers considering participating may be summarised as follows, and are explained in more detail in the sections that follow.

1. *Efficient and easy to use:* Gateway provides an interactive model for pupillage applications, taking much of the administrative burden off Chambers that struggle to keep up with the sheer numbers of applicants involved.
2. *Good audit trail:* Gateway keeps a log of all activity including the full text of any emails sent and changes to application and vacancy statuses, allowing chambers to easily review each year's recruitment process.
3. *Great equalities monitoring:* Gateway provides a granular breakdown of each pupillage vacancy's data, allowing Chambers to gain insights into the diversity profile of each year's recruitment exercise.
4. *High security:* Gateway offers excellent, GDPR-compliant security.
5. *Cost effective:* Gateway is remarkable value compared to other recruitment methods Chambers might use.
6. *Anonymised applicant data:* Gateway allows Chambers to choose to have their candidate data anonymised, so names and other personal details are hidden with ID numbers. This is in line with recruitment best practice for equality and diversity.

A detailed guide to each feature can be found on subsequent pages. In addition, if you want to know more:

- the Jobsgopublic Support Team are available to guide you, and can be contacted on 0207 427 8250 (Mon-Fri, 9am to 5.30pm) or support@jobsgopublic.com; and
- The Bar Council [Gateway](http://www.pupillagegateway.com/about-bar-council/faqs) website has a list of useful FAQs - www.pupillagegateway.com/about-bar-council/faqs



(1) Efficient and easy to use:

Why is Gateway better?

Gateway is much more efficient than home-made systems, cutting down on workload by saving administrative time. It has the following features:

- Gateway moves the entire application process online, saving time and effort for prospective pupils and chambers alike.
- Gateway provides Chambers with a customisable application form: Chambers may add their own tailored questions to the application, and select a suitable word limit.
- Candidates apply via a simple online form, which is then accessible to chambers users either as a printable download, or to review and score online, saving paper and the admin associated with printing and distributing.
- Email communication between chambers and candidates is made easy via simple customisable templates, and the audit trail (see below) means all such communications are logged.
- Gateway has a reference collection system that enables Chambers quickly and easily to contact an applicant's references via Gateway, tracking the date of last contact and issuing further communications where necessary.
- Gateway uses online shortlisting, allowing applications to be viewed and scored online, avoiding large scale printing and offering a secure audit trail of each year's scoring and shortlisting decisions (see further point (2) below).
- Gateway also uses offer scheduling: offer emails to successful applicants may be set up to send far in advance of the offer deadline, giving peace of mind that the most suitable candidates will be contacted with your offer as soon as the deadline passes.
- Thus, at the end of the process, offers can be made with a few clicks, and scheduled in advance of the offer deadline to avoid a last-minute rush.

How does Gateway do this?

By using advanced technology developed by our Gateway provider, Jobsgopublic, from vast experience of other multiple job application fields.



(2) Audit trail

Why is Gateway better?

Gateway keeps a log of all activity, including the full text of any emails sent and changes to application and vacancy statuses. This can be accessed for each applicant very easily, so you can check what they've been sent and which stages their form has moved through.

How does Gateway do this?

Same wonderful tech!

(3) Encouraging Diversity and Equalities monitoring

Why is Gateway better?

There are three points to make which are of particular relevance to Chancery sets which may struggle to attract a diverse range of candidates:

First, the Gateway makes it very easy to comply with, and indeed go beyond, BSB requirements for pupillage selection.

Secondly, Gateway gives Chambers an ability to reach out to a much broader and more diverse range of applicants, beyond those candidates who traditionally apply to Chancery Chambers. Chambers who use the Gateway will therefore have a much better opportunity to increase the breadth and diversity of their pool of applicants.

Thirdly, the Gateway is a fairer and more equitable system for students, since it provides a single point of application. A fragmented and complex system of pupillage applications is likely to disadvantage students who don't have good contacts with the Bar or who attend universities which do not traditionally send many applicants to the Bar.

How does Gateway do this?

Gateway provides two methods to review your equalities data for each pupillage vacancy - a simple on-screen summary and a downloadable breakdown. This allows you to gain insights into the diversity profile of each year's recruitment exercise.

By providing a single point of entry and a co-ordinated timetable for applications, Gateway is readily accessible and comprehensible to all pupillage applicants. The Education and Training Committee of the Bar Council is of the view that the current fragmented system, in which applicants have to navigate a multiplicity of different application processes, operates to the disadvantage of non-traditional candidates, and that Chancery sets outside the Gateway are as a result likely to recruit from a less diverse pool than sets which recruit through the Gateway.



(4) Security

Why is Gateway better?

Gateway offers excellent data security, keeping all candidate data and shortlisting information behind a secure login – instead of on multiple files or even pieces of paper across Chambers' desks.

How does Gateway do this?

Gateway requires each user to have their own secure login, then tracks the activity of each Chambers user, keeping strong audit trails of all access to data. Moving the application review and shortlisting process online keeps all this sensitive data secure, rather than exposing it to the risk of printing and passing around paper copies. Further, once the GDPR are in force, Gateway will be able to provide a fully compliant process for Chambers to use.

(5) Cost effective

Why is Gateway better?

The annual subscription cost of Gateway is currently £395 plus VAT. Compare that to the cost of advertising pupillages by other means, and then processing the applications.

How does Gateway do this?

Because Gateway is a not-for-profit service run by the Bar for the Bar.

(6) Anonymising candidate names and personal details

Why is Gateway better?

Chambers who wish to anonymise candidate data can let the Gateway technology take the strain: no more tippex!

How does Gateway do this?

Gateway has a setting that anonymises personal data if Chambers so wish, so that shortlisters cannot see the names or other identifying information for applications under review. This works by replacing the data with an ID number, so applications can still be differentiated, but without personally identifying the applicant.



Timetable

Tuesday 28th November 2017	Vacancies go live (but chambers can upload vacancies up to Friday 5 January).
Monday 8th January 2018	Submissions window for applications opens.
Wednesday 7th February 2018	Submissions window closes.
February – April 2018	Interviews.
Thursday 3rd May 2018	Offers can be made.

Testimonials

“Gateway has improved our pupillage recruitment experience, with easier access to a wider pool of deserving candidates. We are very happy to have gone in.”

Peter Blair, Chief Operating Officer of Quadrant Chambers.

“Brick Court Chambers has been a member of the Gateway system (and its predecessors) since their inception.

Provided a large majority of sets remain within Gateway, it is a system which benefits both prospective pupils and sets: prospective pupils because they are able to make an unpressured choice from among their offers; sets because they have the opportunity to seek to attract their top choice of pupils without them having been picked off early by another set.”

Mike Bools QC, Chair of the Pupillage Committee, Brick Court Chambers

“Essex Court Chambers has been a member of the Pupillage Gateway (and its predecessors) since their inception. We consistently receive applications from candidates of exceptional calibre. Sets that are not in Gateway are missing out on those candidates who want to compete for a pupillage at a Gateway set.”

Claire Blanchard QC, Chair of Pupillage Committee, Essex Court Chambers



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