

Attorney General's London Civil ABC Panel Competitions 2023

Thank you for your interest in the London ABC Panel Competitions. The competitions will open on **Tuesday 28 February** and will close at **noon** on **Wednesday 5 April 2023**.

Applicants must have at least two years' advocacy experience in actual practice by 5 April 2023 (starting from end of 2nd six months' pupillage for barristers, end of training contract for solicitors).

Eligibility

The Attorney General maintains (by means of an open advertisement and application process) a number of panels of junior Counsel to undertake civil work for all Government departments; these are London, Regional, and Public International Law (PIL) Panels, each set up as follows:

- A Panel – this is for senior juniors with usually at least 10 years post pupillage advocacy experience at the point of appointment
- B Panel – this is for middle juniors who have usually at least 5 years post-pupillage advocacy experience
- C Panel – this is for juniors who have at least 2 years post-pupillage advocacy experience.

Note the years of experience are a minimum and many of those on the panel have considerably more experience than the minimum. Members of the A panel deal with the most complex government cases in all kinds of courts and tribunals including the Supreme Court. They will often appear against KCs. Members of the B panel deal with substantial cases but not in general as complex as those handled by the A panel. They will generally be instructed where knowledge and experience of a particular field is required. Members of the C panel are likely to be instructed as sole advocates in County Court or Tribunal cases. They may be instructed as a junior to more senior counsel.

The size of each panel is determined by need. Applicants should determine which level of panel they wish to apply for and can apply for one panel only. In choosing which of the panels to apply to, candidates must make a careful decision based on which best suits their level of expertise and experience. If you have been or are already on the London C Panel, you cannot reapply for the London C Panel; you must apply for the London B panel. The same applies in relation to London B Panel; you must apply for A Panel and cannot reapply for the B panel. If you are a current member of the A Panel you may reapply to remain on A Panel.

Please try and avoid registering for the competition a day or two before the deadline. Your application will require detailed planning and some considerable thought so aim to give yourself plenty of time to build an insightful form.

Completing the Application

Registration for the competition opens on the 28 February. Once you have registered, please ensure that you download the application form and guidance. The information below is intended as an overview to allow you to plan your application.

Case Lists

We will ask you for an advocacy and an advisory case list. Please do not provide a diary print-out as this will not provide the information the selection board want to see. They want to understand each candidate's current practice.

Advocacy and Advisory examples

We will ask you for details of your advocacy and advisory work. The selection board want to see examples that showcase the range and complexity of each candidate's experience. The need to anonymise examples is understood but this should be done in such a way that the reader can still follow the narrative. It is important to provide a brief background on the case details but bear in mind the majority of your answer should focus on your own role and contribution and the impact you had on the outcome of the case.

Lesson Learned

We ask candidates to answer a separate question on an advocacy and advisory lesson learned. You are no longer required to include lessons learned in respect of each of your advocacy and advisory examples. When answering this question, candidates should ask themselves, what have you learned/reflected on from your last year of practice?

The selection board want applicants to identify a case from which they have gained experience that they have been able to take away. The lesson learned should not be too basic or perfunctory, i.e. the need to prepare for cross-examination. Candidates should provide evidence of insight and self-reflection.

Written Sample

Bearing in mind that the selection board does not conduct interviews, it is important that the example of written work submitted fully reflects each candidate's abilities. The opinion (or a skeleton see further below) is the only direct evidence that the selection board sees of the applicant's work. A recent example of a well-structured piece of written work dealing with difficult topics in a manner that the reader finds reasonably easy to understand is more likely to create a favourable impression than those which do not. In making your choice of opinion you should bear in mind the following considerations

- It should contain an element of legal analysis rather than just be based entirely on issues of fact
- If you are putting in something that is more than 3 years old then you should explain why you have nothing more recent that is suitable
- You do not want something that is too short or too long. If it is long then it needs a good summary. We are looking at the quality and a shorter piece of written work that hits the mark is likely to be effective in demonstrating concision. Full guidance, including page count, will be available from 28 February
- The greater divorced the content from the kind of work that government lawyers do, the clearer and more understandable to the lay reader the opinion needs to be
- Our preference is not for joint opinions but In the case of a jointly signed document, you must confirm that it was principally your own work

Where a candidate does not have any recent examples of written work, the board would find it helpful to understand why. You may submit a skeleton but on balance we would prefer an Opinion rather than a Skeleton. However we are aware that in some areas of practice, applicants may have difficulties in providing one, in which case a Skeleton Argument will be perfectly acceptable, using the written work guidelines above

Government litigation question

The response to this question should indicate that the candidate has an appreciation for the special

demands of working for government: focussing on the challenges that face those acting for government and how they would go about tackling those challenges **in their area of specialism**. You may find this video helpful for this question.

<https://youtu.be/POtkKalmBMY>

References

Those applying to the A Panel should provide five references, at least two of which should come from members of the judiciary. Those applying to the C or B Panel should provide three references. We recommend that candidates provide at least one reference from a member of the judiciary. If you are already a panel member it is a good idea to have a reference from a Government lawyer.

Advocacy is a fundamental part of the role of Panel Counsel. We would therefore expect at least one referee to speak in detail about an applicant's advocacy skills and experience. However it is recognised that this may not always be possible because of the nature of the litigation if the applicant is most regularly involved in areas such as: Procurement; Construction; IT; Contractual/Commercial disputes. In such cases applicants may wish to consider submitting references from those who have observed them and can comment on their conduct during stages of the litigation process that do not involve advocacy.

We do recognise that for lawyers with limited post qualification experience, it may not be possible to find a judicial referee. However the greater the advocacy experience of the applicant, the more the selection board might question why a judicial reference was not provided.

Helpful videos explaining the process for reference selection can be found below.

General References https://youtu.be/J6J_Lvmkc4c

Judicial References <https://youtu.be/arH9ZfSi2jo>

Other than judicial references https://youtu.be/70_YLqnxvs

To make an application please email the [Panel Counsel](#) team on or from Tuesday 28 February and register an interest in applying. Please note that registering an interest does not commit you to making an application if you later decide not to do so. Once you have registered, you will be provided with a link to access our online portal to obtain the full application pack.

Mentoring scheme

As part of the Attorney General's aim of encouraging as wide a selection of applicants as possible, potential applicants can use our mentoring service. Mentors will be established panel members who can discuss their panel experience, the application process, eligibility criteria and presentation of relevant information. For more details, please contact the [Panel Counsel](#) team.

If you have a question please email [Panel Counsel](#) and a member of the team will contact you and offer assistance.

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