



OSCOLA

OSCOLA Mentorship
Programme HT2021

**GUIDE FOR
MENTORS**



Oxford Law Society

OSCOLA Mentorship Programme HT21 – Mentor Guide

Dear Mentor,

On behalf of the Oxford Society for Commercial Law and the Oxford Law Society, thank you very much for volunteering with the OSCOLA Mentorship Programme! Without the kind support of mentors like yourself who are willing to support the next batch of aspiring commercial lawyers, this programme would not be possible.

Navigating the legal industry is a complicated process on its own. Unfortunately, with the scourge of COVID-19, it has only become more challenging to juggle applications with academic work and opportunities to network with potential employers in person have evaporated. Being aspiring commercial lawyers ourselves, we understand the anxieties and uncertainties one may be facing during this journey. That is why we've launched this mentorship programme, the first of its kind dedicated to commercial law, to support others on their journey. As mentors, you have walked this path ahead of your mentees and share a passion for helping fellow Oxonians succeed as you have.

While mentorship is a fluid process that can be driven in the way you and your mentee deem fit, we have put together this manual to provide some guidance on developing an effective mentorship relationship. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us at info@oscola.org.

Thank you once again and we wish you a fruitful and rewarding mentorship journey ahead!

Yours faithfully,

Joseph Khaw
Co-President
The Oxford Society for Commercial Law

Role of Mentors

Expectations

As full-time students or professionals with a myriad of different commitments, we understand that you have busy schedules. As such, the OSCOLA Mentorship Programme allows you the freedom to schedule virtual meetings with your mentee at a mutually convenient time and at a frequency that suits both your needs. If you prefer not having meetings, you are welcome to provide support to your mentee solely through a medium of your choice, such as email or over Messenger. You are not expected to always be available to answer your mentee's questions and mentees have been advised to take initiative in their mentoring relationship.

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Furthermore, you are not expected to share your past applications with them, make personal or professional introductions, or vet their applications unless you are comfortable with doing so - in which case, please feel free to do so!

Please always be courteous and respectful to your mentee and they are similarly expected to treat you with respect.

Recommendations

While the mentorship programme is flexible and should remain driven by the goals of your mentee, the following are some recommendations to facilitate a productive mentorship programme:

- Identify what helped you succeed in your previous applications and think about where you could help your mentee develop. Discuss these with them at your first meeting.
- If you are comfortable with doing so, provide examples of your successful applications and walk your mentee through them. Teaching by example is an effective way mentees can learn to improve their applications.
- Be open to sharing about your experiences and struggles in pursuing your current career path. Listening to your journey can help your mentee rationalise their own motivations for pursuing a career in commercial law and inspire them further.
- Suggested activities include discussing why you chose the firms/chambers that you did, mock interviews or discussions of current affairs relevant for interviews, and sharing past experiences at assessment centres and vacation schemes.

Building Effective Mentor-Mentee Relationships

Here are some tips that may help you develop an effective mentorship relationship with your mentee:

- Clearly communicate what you have experienced in your own journey and what you are comfortable with assisting with.
- Establish boundaries and expectations regarding matters such as when you are comfortable with your mentee contacting you and how frequently.
- Communicate openly with your mentee regarding when you will be unavailable.
- Be willing to let your personality shine through and be open with your mentee sharing theirs too.
- Provide honest and constructive feedback to your mentee with the aim of helping them improve.

Resources

To assist your mentee in their exploration or pursuit of commercial law as a career path, the following are some guiding themes and questions that you may wish to explore with them:

- Choosing a career
 - What do I want out of a career? Is commercial law for me?
 - Do I wish to become a barrister or solicitor?
- Choosing a firm/chambers
 - What practice groups, areas and/or sectors interest me?
 - Would I prefer contentious or non-contentious work?
- Writing strong applications
 - What makes a good CV, cover letter, and application form?
 - How do I tailor my application to the firm/chambers?
 - How do I develop commercial awareness? What is it even?
- Interviews and assessment centres
 - What can I expect at an assessment centre?
 - How can I best prepare for interviews and assessment centres?
- Vacation schemes
 - What can I expect at a virtual vacation scheme?
 - What can I do to maximise my chances of converting a vacation scheme?

We have also compiled a list of **free** resources that you may find useful for your mentoring journey depending on which stage your mentee is at in their journey. These have also been shared with the mentees:

Just Starting Out

- [The Lawyer Portal: Commercial Law Guide](#)
- TargetJobs: [Commercial Solicitors](#) or [Commercial Barristers](#)

Exploring the Industry

- [Chambers & Partners, Chambers Student](#)
- [Chambers Student: Researching Law Firms](#)
- [Legal500](#)
- [All About Law: Legal Practice Areas](#)

Making Applications

- [Shearman & Sterling's Training Contract Application Guide](#)
- [Psychometric Test Practices](#): Oxford's Career Service offers current students **free access** to JobTestPrep where you can access Watson Glaser practice tests

Conclusion and Contact

At the end of the term, we will be in touch to collect your feedback on the programme and to provide a certificate of appreciation. Thank you for joining the OSCOLA Mentorship Programme and we wish you a fruitful mentorship journey ahead!

If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to contact us at info@oscola.org.