

Nicholas Macklam

Called: 2013

Qualifications:

2006 – 2009: LLB (First Class), University of Reading

2009 – 2010: BCL, St Hugh's College, Oxford

2011 – 2013: BPTC (Outstanding), The University of Law



Nick became a member of Radcliffe Chambers in October 2014, having successfully completed pupillage with us.

Here Nick discusses his experience of pupillage at Radcliffe Chambers and how it helped prepare him for life as a barrister.

“Walking into Chambers on my first day of pupillage was, I must admit, both a nervous and exciting experience. Radcliffe had been great in ensuring I had as much information as possible in advance, so I knew who my first supervisor was going to be and at what time I needed to arrive in Chambers. This certainly helped to ease some of the first day nerves.

My first morning was spent doing a tour of Chambers and being introduced to everyone (and instantly forgetting almost all of their names). In the afternoon, it was down to work and my supervisor gave me something relatively straightforward to look at. This was an advice on whether the terms of a Tomlin Order had been breached and, if so, the possible remedies and the next steps. In the following weeks and months, the work became more challenging and varied, ranging from difficult inheritance tax issues relating to trusts to delicate Court of Protection matters.

Pupillage here is typically divided into four three month periods, each with a different supervisor. Much of my time in chambers was spent working on my supervisors' cases, but I also had the opportunity to do a number of pieces of work for other members of chambers. This allowed me to gain experience in the full range of practice areas covered within chambers, such as trusts, wills, charities, pensions, commercial, insolvency and property. It also gave other members of chambers the chance to get to know me and my work. I was always given prompt, constructive and generous feedback which really helped me to develop as a barrister.

During my second six months of pupillage, I started to take on work of my own and represent my own clients in court. As well as being very exciting, it was of course a little daunting to be representing real clients in front of real judges for the first time. However, I found that my

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experiences during the first six months of pupillage had equipped me with all of the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed right from the outset. In addition, members of chambers were always willing to offer advice or discuss tricky points through with me. This helped enormously during my first few months of practice. In addition, in the weeks and months preceding my second six some of the junior members invited me to accompany them to court to observe the type of hearings that I would be likely to see in my first months of practice. This was invaluable experience and meant that I knew exactly what to do when my own cases came in.

The court work during my second six consisted mostly of interim applications (summary judgment, injunctions, etc.), possession hearings (landlord and tenant, trespass, mortgage), insolvency (corporate and personal), costs and case management hearings, and small claims trials.

The benefit of a practising second six is that it eases the transition from pupil to tenant by enabling the pupil to develop relationships with solicitors at an early stage, meaning that by my first day of tenancy I already had solicitors who were instructing me regularly. It also allows the pupil to build a relationship with his or her clerks, which is one of the most important professional relationships that a barrister will ever have.

One important feature of pupillage at Radcliffe Chambers – and one which I genuinely believe marks it out from other pupillages – is the support given to the pupil by everyone in chambers. We are a friendly set with a very positive atmosphere. We pride ourselves on the quality of our pupillage and so everyone is keen for the pupil to succeed. Our application process is rigorous, which means that gaining pupillage here is in itself an achievement, and our retention rate is extremely high as a result.

Chambers is also a very sociable place to be. Members of chambers usually meet for tea most afternoons, which provides a great, informal opportunity to hear about what everyone else has been working on and to pick up some valuable tips for the future. The junior members can also usually be relied upon for a beer or two on a Friday evening after a hard week!

Pupillage can be, and should be, a challenging experience. There is a steep learning curve from university and the BPTC to practice as a barrister, and pupillage is there to equip you for everything that life at the Bar can throw at you. Naturally, it can be a demanding time. But the rewards are great, and a pupillage at Radcliffe Chambers puts you in the best possible position to achieve them.”

