

ALBA Mentoring Scheme **A brief guide¹**

ALBA's mentoring scheme matches more junior public law practitioners (mentees) with more senior public law practitioners (mentors) to facilitate exchange of ideas and support, primarily from the mentor to the mentee.

1. How mentoring works

The Mentor helps another person to develop and enhance their career by:

- being a source of advice and guidance
- passing on knowledge, the benefit of experience and/or skills
- acting as a sounding board and giving support
- helping to put learning into practice
- helping with problem solving and dealing with challenges
- talking about their career and work/life balance
- directing to other resources where appropriate

all underpinned with a high degree of trust and mutual regard.

2. Mentoring

- Mentoring is a confidential, time specific, one-on-one relationship, based on the mentee's objectives, with regular communication between both parties (we would suggest as a very broad indication around once every two months)
- In ALBA's scheme, the mentor will generally be more experienced than the mentee

3. Benefits to a ALBA Mentee

- Access to a source of advice outside your immediate work environment
- Access to help with problem solving and dealing with challenges
- Clearer understanding of career pitfalls and opportunities
- Support in managing relationships in the workplace
- Development of professional skills
- Public law specific advice and support

4. Benefits to a ALBA Mentor

- Opportunities to improve skills
- Making a contribution, individually and professionally by helping another member of the public law bar
- Renewed focus on own career/personal development
- Building experience in areas of competence
- Gaining other perspectives

5. Responsibilities of a Mentee

- Be clear about expectations
- Specify what benefit they are looking for in the mentoring relationship
- Agree the initial time-frame of a year
- Drive the mentoring relationship

¹ With thanks to the Chancery Bar Association, from whose guide this document draws heavily

- Take responsibility for arranging meetings and the agenda for them
- Complete a feedback form at the end of the mentoring relationship

6. Responsibilities of a Mentor

- Provide guidance based on experience (good and bad)
- Create a positive climate for open communication
- Help identify problems and guide towards solutions
- Offer constructive criticism in a supportive way

7. Complaints and Concerns

The Panel will be responsible for hearing and deciding any complaints and concerns that are raised by Mentors and/or Mentees about the operation of or compliance with the scheme. In the first instance, complaints or concerns should be sent to the Administrator and/or the Panel Chair.

8. The Application Process

The Panel will promote the existence of the mentoring scheme to potential Mentors and will strive to ensure a representative group of mentors are recruited reflecting the full range of protected characteristics. The Panel will expressly seek to avoid unconscious bias in the matching process between Mentors and Mentees and will receive focussed training on this before matching commences.

Members of ALBA who are interested in being mentors should complete a Mentor Application Form, available from the ALBA website. The form asks about your professional background, skills and professional experience. The more information you can provide us with, the more likely we are to be able to match you well.

Members of ALBA who wish to apply to be matched with a mentor should complete a Mentee Application Form, available from the ALBA website. In addition to providing details of your professional background, there is an opportunity to identify any particular issues that you seek to address through the Scheme.

If a Mentee wishes their form to be anonymised for the purposes of the matching process, or not disclosed to a particular member of the Matching Panel, this should be stated in a covering note to the Administrator when returning the form. No reasons need be given.

Mentor and Mentee forms should be sent to administrator@adminlaw.org.uk

Matching of mentors and mentees takes place as and when applications are received and mentoring requests made, although a specific request for applications will be made at the start of each legal year (October). The primary application period will be the start of each legal year, but there will be further matches made at the start of each legal term. (January and April)

9. The Matching Process

The matching process is carried out by a small panel of Association members (the Matching Panel), who are currently as follows:

George Peretz KC
Gary Howard
Alice Irving
Shu Shin Luh
Jason Pobjoy

When the Matching Panel has identified a possible Mentor, the Panel will check with the Mentor that there is no exceptional reason that they should be matched with the prospective Mentee. The Administrator will contact the Mentee for permission to give out the Mentee's contact details to the prospective Mentor. If the Mentee agrees, the Administrator will then provide the Mentor with the Mentee's contact details and they will be asked to make contact with each other. If the Mentee does not agree, the Administrator will, if the Mentee wishes, refer the form back to the Matching Panel for a further Mentor to be identified.

The information on the forms is kept confidential and is held by the Chair of the Matching Panel (subject only to Rules C66-C69 and Guidance gC95-g102 (see below*)), although Mentee forms will be destroyed once a Mentee is matched with a Mentor, if the Mentee so requests.

10. Getting the Mentoring Relationship Started

ALBA asks that at the outset, the Mentor and Mentee should agree some ground rules about the mentoring relationship. For example:

- it is important to discuss the purpose of the mentoring relationship.
- the mentoring relationship will last for an initial fixed period of a year, with potential to renew for a further year if both parties agree
- the manner and frequency of meetings
- whether meetings will be in person or remote
- if and how you will communicate between meetings (email/phone/text?)
- confidentiality: the information shared by Mentee and Mentor will ordinarily be confidential. That is subject to Bar Council regulations, which require disclosure in compliance with professional obligations: see below*. There will be various specific confidentiality issues to consider: Is the Mentee content that the fact of the mentoring relationship is known to others? Are there other confidentiality issues to consider?
- boundaries and any other issues

* The Bar Code of Conduct imposes certain reporting obligations on barristers who have reasonable grounds to believe there has been serious misconduct by another barrister (see Rules C66-C69 and Guidance gC95-g102), which can include assault and harassment. The Bar Council has confirmed that these rules continue to apply even in a confidential mentoring relationship. Accordingly, if a mentoring application form discloses such matters, or such matters are raised for discussion within a mentoring relationship, the members of the Matching Panel, or the Mentor and/or Mentee may come under a reporting obligations in relation to such matters, which overrides the confidentiality which otherwise attaches to all information and communications.

At the end of this Guide, there is a checklist for Mentors and Mentees to use at

the outset of the relationship to help set the parameters. There is also useful guidance to be found in the Bar Council Mentoring Handbook which will be published shortly.

11. The mentoring relationship

Mentoring starts by building a rapport: creating the right environment, demonstrating interest in the other person and developing a common sense of purpose.

Mentoring should be purposeful, not aimless. Try to set goals to achieve: be realistic about this!

As the mentoring relationship progresses, you can examine any specific issues/incidents as they arise and review how they have been handled and what has been learnt along the way.

If for any reason a Mentor has to end a mentoring relationship before the end of the one year cycle, for example because they no longer have sufficient time, then the Panel will seek to identify an alternative Mentor for the Mentee.

Checklist for the Start of a Mentoring Relationship

Have you done the following?

- Exchanged contact details and agreed contact preferences (e.g. email)
- Discussed what the Mentee is particularly looking to get out of the mentoring relationship
- Agreed how often you will aim to meet or talk (e.g. once a month)
- Set goals for what you hope to achieve through the mentoring relationship
- Agreed who will be responsible for arranging meetings & the agenda for them (e.g. the Mentee)- can be face-to-face or by telephone
- Agreed where and when you will next meet
- Discussed confidentiality
- Discussed any other boundaries/limits or preferences the Mentee has about the mentoring relationship
- Agreed that either party can terminate the mentoring relationship, at any time and without giving reasons