

Becoming a barrister

Your route to the Bar with Gray's



Make your mark.

Introducing the Inns of Court

The Inns of Court are the historic societies that provide education and training to barristers in England and Wales.

There are four: Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn, Inner Temple and Gray's Inn. For over six hundred years, the Inns have held exclusive rights to admit candidates to the Bar (known as 'Call to the Bar' or 'Call'). Everyone seeking to become a barrister must join an Inn before starting the Bar Course.

The Inns vary in terms of their culture, scholarships and approach to training, and you can only apply to one - so it is important that you choose the one that is right for you.

Take your place

A warm welcome to and from Gray's Inn, the smallest but friendliest of the four Inns of Court. Joining an Inn of Court is the first step in embarking on a career as a barrister - one of the most important decisions of your life.

If you do decide on a career as a barrister, you must go into it with your eyes wide open. The Bar is both extraordinarily demanding and very rewarding. The training is intensive and the cost can be high. Not everyone who sets out on the journey can reach the goal of practising as a barrister. Not everyone who attains that goal will succeed. But there are many valuable and rewarding roles for which becoming a barrister will qualify you. And if you have the talent and motivation, Gray's Inn is here to help you to succeed.

I joined Gray's Inn in 1966, soon after graduating from university, when I decided to qualify as a barrister. I joined Gray's because it had a reputation for welcoming a diverse range of people from a wide variety of backgrounds, not just those who came from London or wanted to practise there. It also had a reputation for making the qualifying sessions good fun as well as useful. We pride ourselves on not being stuffy and creating an atmosphere in which everyone - students, pupil barristers, barristers and judges - can get to know and learn from one another, which is what the Inns of Court have always been about. Gray's is an inspirational environment and I'm proud to be a Member. I believe that if you join us here, you will experience the same sense of pride.

Those of you who do succeed in becoming a barrister will find that it is a profession like no other - for many, it is not just a profession but a calling. In the increasingly complex and fractious world in which we live, the rule of law and the values of justice, equality and fairness matter more than ever. And one of these days you might become a judge like me, even though I never dreamt of that all those years ago.

In these pages you will learn more about what to expect and what you will need to do. You will also learn why, like me, you should set out on your journey at Gray's Inn.



*The Right Hon the Baroness Hale of Richmond DBE
President of the Supreme Court, 2017 to 2020
Treasurer of Gray's Inn, 2017*

“Gray's is an inspirational environment and I'm proud to be a Member.”



Welcome to Gray's Inn

Where individuals thrive

Gray's is an Inn with a distinguished history and a distinctive culture.

We do things differently

With around five and a half thousand active Members, and around four hundred student Members at any one time, Gray's is an Inn with a distinguished history and a distinctive culture. Like all of the Inns of Court, we believe in recognising and rewarding talent and in training to help advance the next generation of barristers. But we know that it has never been harder to succeed, which is why Gray's does things very differently.

Every Member counts

From your first contact with Gray's, to your Call and beyond, we will stand with you, empowering you with the opportunities to rise as far and as fast as your ambition will take you. Ours is a stimulating yet nurturing home in which individuals thrive. A place where intellect, talent and hard-work combine with wisdom and experience to breed fearless champions of justice. It's all about our Members.

We make it personal

Our small size means we are friendly and less formal, so at Gray's you will always feel like a name, not a number. Gray's is often described as collegiate, and as a Member you will rub shoulders with barristers of all generations and levels of seniority on a daily basis. You will get to know many of your legal heroes and role models on your journey with us to the Bar.

Make your mark

Gray's has a very particular approach to scholarships, to education, training and career development. We work hard to support and champion each Member differently, identifying your unique needs, interests and talents, never quashing individuality. We take pride in creating a space in which your voice will be heard.

We are committed to social responsibility and social mobility. Our Griffin Access Programme identifies and invests in talented young people from underrepresented backgrounds and our pioneering programme Vocalise, trains prison inmates and young offenders in public-speaking. All part of our ongoing commitment to achieving equality, improving access and building a Bar for all.



A Member's story:

"As a mature student from a non-traditional background, I had a preconceived perception of the Bar's homogeneity. However, my experience at Gray's has proven to be the opposite of that; I have met so many different individuals from diverse backgrounds and with different stories, who came together to pursue and uphold a shared understanding of legal excellence, tradition, and progression."

Justin Yang – Called 2019

Walking in the footsteps of greatness

For more than 600 years, Gray's Inn Members have been making their mark and changing the world. We are proud of our achievements, but we believe that tradition is nothing unless it is reinvigorated by each new generation. If you have the talent and the drive, we will be by your side when you come to add the next chapters to our story.

6

1388

ORIGINS OF THE INN

The earliest known reference to the existence of the Inn as a lodging of lawyers appears in 1370. However, the precise date of the establishment of Gray's Inn within the Greys' manor house is not documented.

1541

LORD BURGHLEY

William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley, was the principal adviser to Queen Elizabeth I. A master of statecraft, he served as Secretary of State and Lord High Treasurer and was the most powerful man in Elizabethan England.
Called - Unknown



1663

SIR JOHN HOLT

As Lord Chief Justice, Sir John Holt was renowned for his great integrity and fairness at a time when the legal system was notoriously corrupt. He was particularly influential in ending the prosecution of witches.
Called 1663



1899

LORD BIRKENHEAD

F. E. Smith, Earl of Birkenhead was a hugely successful barrister, notorious for his oratorical brilliance. He famously defended Dr Crippen's mistress, Ethel Le Neve. His political career also included a term as Lord Chancellor.
Called 1899



1530

FIRST TREASURER

William Walsingham was a lawyer and a landowner. He was father to Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's notorious, Principal Secretary. The "spymaster" was himself admitted to Gray's in 1552.



1582

SIR FRANCIS BACON

Lawyer, parliamentarian and philosopher. In 1597, as legal adviser to Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Bacon was the first barrister to be awarded the designation Queen's Counsel (QC).
Called 1582



1891

LORD ATKIN

Twice Treasurer of Gray's, Lord Atkin served both on the King's Bench and as a Lord Justice of Appeal. He is particularly remembered for the "snail in the bottle" case (Donoghue v Stevenson).
Called 1891



OUR MEMBERS CHANGE THE WORLD



Lady Hale

Educated at a state school in Yorkshire, Brenda Hale was appointed Professor of Law at Manchester (1986), Queen's Counsel (1989), Lord of Appeal in Ordinary and Baroness Hale of Richmond (2004) and, in 2017, the first woman President of the Supreme Court.
Called 1969



Lord Thomas

Appointed Queen's Council (1984) President of the Queen's Bench Division (2011) and Lord Chief Justice (2013). Sir John Thomas was the most senior judge on the three-man panel that in 2016 ruled the Government could not trigger Article 50 without the authority of Parliament.
Called 1969



Sir Terence Etherton

Sir Terence Etherton was the Master of the Rolls and Head of Civil Justice, the second most senior judge in England and Wales. Britain's first openly-gay senior judge, he has been praised for "enlightened thinking" on many sensitive and vital areas of the Law. He was also a judge on the Article 50 panel.
Called 1974

7

1924

ROBINA STEVENS
One of the first three women to be admitted to Gray's, Robina Stevens was until 2013, the youngest person ever called to the Bar. She had passed her exams a year earlier but had to wait until her 21st birthday to be called.
Called 1924



1939

DAME ROSE HEILBRON
Eminent barrister Dame Rose Heilbron, was the first female scholar of Gray's Inn, one of the first two women to be appointed King's Counsel, the first woman to lead in a murder case, the first woman Recorder, and, in 1972, the first woman judge to sit at the Old Bailey.
Called 1939



1959

LORD BINGHAM
Master of the Rolls 1992-96, Lord Chief Justice 1996-2000, President of the Supreme Court 1996-2010. A champion of judicial independence and the Rule of Law and heralded as one of the greatest lawyers of our time.
Called 1959



1989

DAME BOBBIE CHEEMA-GRUBB
The Hon. Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb is a judge of the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice of England and Wales and the first Asian woman to serve as a High Court judge.
Called 1989



1922

DR AMBEDKAR
Indian barrister, economist, politician and reformer. First Law and Justice Minister of independent India he famously drafted the Indian Constitution and was commonly known as the 'Champion of the Untouchables.'
Called 1922



1955

DAME JOYANNE BRACEWELL
An eminent champion of family law, Dame Joyanne Bracewell was the High Court judge responsible for drafting, and then overseeing the implementation of the Children Act 1989 - a significant piece of reforming legislation.
Called 1955



1976

DAME NICOLA DAVIES
Specialising in medical cases, including the Bristol Heart Surgeons Inquiry in 1998, Dame Nicola Davies was appointed High Court judge in 2010, Court of Appeal judge in 2018 and was the first Welsh woman judge in the Court of Appeal.
Called 1976



Your journey, your challenge - and Gray's

The path to becoming a barrister will be both fulfilling and a test of your character. You will learn many new skills - and you will also face formidable challenges. In the pages that follow, we chart your journey and explain how Gray's will be by your side to help you overcome the obstacles.

Do you have what it takes?

You must be bright, academically accomplished and able to digest large quantities of information. You must also be able to express yourself eloquently and enjoy dealing with – and persuading - all kinds of people. You need a good degree. A degree in law is helpful, but not necessary. In fact, many barristers complete degrees in other subjects and then take a law conversion course, The Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) before entering the vocational stage of training (Bar Course) and the statistics show these individuals are just as successful in gaining pupillage compared to those who have a law degree. Above all, you must be self-motivated and determined in the face of what might seem like insurmountable barriers.

“My path to pupillage would not have been possible without the dedicated support I have received from Gray's Inn.”

Justin Yang

Are you ready to face the obstacles?

The Bar is a small, specialist profession and it is hard to gain access. The cost of qualifying can be high and the competition at every stage is intense. In 2025 the Bar Course vocational year alone can cost between £25,000 and £30,000, once living expenses are factored in. Gray's Inn and the other Inns of Court offer valuable scholarships, but if you don't secure one, you will need to fund these costs yourself. Even when you qualify, there are typically 3,000 applicants for around 600 pupillages and after securing and completing your pupillage, you may then need to compete against other pupils for tenancy.

Becoming a barrister is an achievable dream. Talented candidates do succeed and thrive, no matter how underrepresented or atypical their backgrounds or situations. But it is a demanding vocation, and so it is important to approach it with your eyes open.



“Have resilience, keep
going and never give up”

Callee - Hilary 2025



The journey

Your route to the Bar will take you from academic study, through the vocational training of the Bar Course, to the hands-on experience of pupillage. Gray's Inn will be there to support you at every step.



Scholarships at Gray's

Our highest-ever scholarship fund

At Gray's Inn, we are committed to ensuring the very best candidates succeed and are able to make their mark on this extraordinary profession. We understand the pressure that funding can place on our student Members and believe that no talented individual should ever have to fall by the wayside for financial reasons alone. That is why we award at least £1.5 million in scholarship funding each year.



Michaelmas Call 2024

12

£1.5 MILLION

We aim to make our scholarships large enough to make a real difference.

Bar Course
UP TO
£25,000

GDL
UP TO
£15,000

At least
11
Residential
Scholarships

● Bar Course Scholarships

Gray's Inn offers significant financial awards of up to £25,000 for talented Bar Course candidates. These include the prestigious Bedingfield, Prince of Wales and Baroness Hale of Richmond Scholarships. The Hale scholarships are awarded to four outstanding 'all-round' candidates, with a minimum value of £20,000 each. The Keating Chambers Scholarship, designed to support Bar Course students from backgrounds under-represented at the Bar, will receive a minimum award of £15,000. The minimum value of all Bar Course scholarships is £5,000, with additional funding awarded based upon need.

● GDL Scholarships

We offer many scholarships of up to £15,000 for graduates taking the full or part time GDL conversion course, including the prestigious David Karmel Scholarships and the William Charnley and the Dame Joyanne Bracewell Scholarship, with a minimum value of £12,000 and £10,000. GDL Scholars automatically qualify for Bar Course Scholarship interviews and the minimum Bar Course award for our GDL scholars is £7,500. Our minimum award for applicants taking the GDL conversion course, is £2,500.

● Residential Scholarships

All of our Bar Course scholars are also eligible to apply for a Gray's Inn Residential Scholarship. Our fully furnished flats are set within the Inn's grounds, here in the heart of London's legal district. This is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the life of the Inn during your Bar studies. In 2025 we awarded 11 Residential Scholarships.

● Additional Scholarships

Gray's Inn also offers a wide range of other scholarships, including pupillage scholarships to support the final stage of qualification to practise and our Hebe Plunkett Scholarships to assist students and pupils with a disability. The Inn also provides Internship Scholarships, essay prizes and mootng prizes designed to support any Member of the Inn who has yet to secure pupillage.

The Keating Chambers Scholarship

In 2022 we launched a social mobility scholarship in partnership with Keating Chambers. In awarding £15,000 to the winning candidate, the Keating Chambers Scholarship supports a Bar Student from a background under-represented at the Bar, who may not have otherwise been able to embark on this journey. In addition to meeting the merit assessment criteria, the successful candidate will express an interest in practice areas compatible with the work of Keating Chambers as well as demonstrate a social mobility-based need for financial support.

“Our aim is to encourage applications from all those who believe they have the talent to become a barrister.”



*The Honourable Mrs Justice Lieven
Trustee, The Gray's Inn Scholarship Trust – Called 1989*

Scholarships with a valuable difference

Our total scholarship fund is significant but it's the way that we allocate the money that really sets us apart.

At Gray's, rather than awarding a large number of smaller amounts that leave students with the greatest financial need still needing to find many thousands of pounds, each major Gray's scholarship is big enough to make a genuine difference to its recipients. For Bar Course scholars, our average award value is over £12,000. For GDL it is over £5,000

14

Each major scholarship is big enough to make a genuine difference



Left: Paul Fradley – Called 2019
Right: Andrew Ng – Student

Bar Course
UP TO
£25,000

Financial scholarship of up to £25,000 +
Residential Scholarships available

GDL
UP TO
£15,000

For GDL scholars, our average
award value is £6,000.

What are my chances?

We understand that choosing to become a barrister is a momentous decision and that before committing yourself to the Bar you will want an idea of the numbers and statistics to estimate your chances of success.

It is also likely you will find yourself agonising over the ways each of the Inns assess their scholarship candidates, and whether it's better to apply to an Inn that interviews every candidate or choose one that doesn't. The truth is, across all the Inns, a similar percentage of all Bar Course scholarship applicants receive awards, whatever the interviewing policy.

“I was blown away by how comprehensive the scholarships were at Gray's.”

Andrew Ng

At Gray's we treat your written application as your first piece of advocacy. It is your first opportunity to make your mark and if your application shines, we will call you for interview and then your chances of receiving a scholarship are very good indeed. In 2025, 60% of those we interviewed for a Bar Course scholarship received an award and 67% of those interviewed for a GDL scholarship.

If you have what it takes, the scholarship team at Gray's will do everything in its power to help make your dream of becoming a barrister a reality.



A break with tradition: David Cobley's portrait of Lady Hale features her smiling.



A Member's story:

"It means the absolute world to me. The fact that the Inn believed in my potential enough to provide me with financial backing gave me confidence in my decision to become a barrister. It also meant I was able to complete the Bar Course, which my financial circumstances at the time would not have provided for."

Talita Zavrsnik de Campos

How we award scholarships

It's all about the individual

At Gray's, we support individuals with the potential to make a mark not only on the law, but also on our community of practitioners. So while we are looking for evidence of your intellectual ability, we don't stop there. We believe in choosing scholars who embody the characteristics most valued by the profession and the Inn. This means that in addition to your qualifications and evidence of your commitment to the Bar, we are looking for individuals with motivation, resilience and integrity.

- **Academic ability** - Demonstrates the strong academic foundation necessary to succeed as a barrister.
- **Advocacy** - Can develop a well-structured, succinct, grammatically correct, and persuasive argument. As a public speaker can communicate clearly, concisely, convincingly and persuasively.
- **Drive & determination** - Possesses drive, determination and a strong work ethic to overcome adversity or achieve goals, whilst remaining calm when under pressure
- **Problem solving** - The ability to apply lateral and original thinking to solve problems and work with complex information to extract key information and facts to develop an argument.
- **Motivation to succeed** - Demonstrates a clear interest in the Bar and has got the conviction and ambition to become a barrister. Has taken well considered steps to gain an understanding of the profession.



Cumberland Lodge, Student Residential

Every person has
their own story.
What's yours?

Awarded on merit, increased for need

All scholarships are awarded based on your performance against published assessment criteria. However, once we have made the decision to award, your individual circumstances will determine the value of your financial award. At Gray's, we want to award the greatest amount of money to those with the greatest need. We increase the value of our awards significantly through financial assessment, and we all scholars to engage with this part of the process.

What to expect

If you are called to interview, you will be invited to Gray's Inn to spend around fifteen minutes with a panel of three practising barristers or other qualified professionals, who may be Members of the Judiciary or academics. We know that many people might find this intimidating. Then again, many people might find it intimidating to stand up in court to defend a client before a judge and jury, in front of a packed public gallery. We are looking for individuals who relish the challenge, see the interview as an opportunity and use it as a chance to shine.

Engage early

We want you to give yourself the best possible chance of success. For this reason, we urge you to engage with the application process early. Give yourself time to understand the merit criteria, draft your online application, and give your referees time to write a strong reference. Take advantage of insight opportunities such as our free Scholarship Q&A events, available before the GDL and Bar Course application deadlines. You do not need to join an Inn before applying for a scholarship.



Simao Paxi-Cato – Called 2010



A Member's story:

"The interview was not long, but in that short time I felt the panel really got to know me and my story. They were all very interested and wanted to know my ambitions and the reasons behind my aspiration to be a barrister. It was a really enjoyable experience as I was able to share these thoughts and feelings with the kinds of like-minded individuals whom I aspire to join."

Lauren Maires – Called 2021

Education and training at Gray's

With you for the journey

Gray's Inn is rich in its traditions, history and achievements. But we believe that where Gray's truly comes to life is through its Membership. For the past 600 years, the Inn has been run by our Members, for our Members, with each successive generation playing its part in welcoming and imparting its skills and knowledge to the next. As a Member-driven society, we are committed to creating more opportunities for you to make your mark. This philosophy is embedded into our culture, through something we call the Circle of Membership.

Left: Anesta Weekes QC – Called 1981
Right: Zoë Saunders – Called 2003



18

The Circle of Membership

The Gray's Inn Circle of Membership is an extraordinary Member-to-Member commitment, that underpins our education, training and support initiatives. It's a programme in which over 800 esteemed Members – including some of the biggest names at the Bar – return to give their time and experience to nurture the next generation.

Support tailored to your needs

The strength of our network and Gray's' unique size and culture means that we are able to take a personal approach to training, so that you receive the particular support you require, tailored to you.

**We champion our
Members. We want
you to succeed.**

Georgina Kent



Qualifying Sessions

If you have looked into the process of becoming a barrister, you will know that Qualifying Sessions (QS) are a formal requirement. In order to practise as a barrister, you need to be Called to the Bar and in order to be Called to the Bar, you have to complete ten Qualifying Sessions. Qualifying Sessions are classified under the following five themes and have specific learning outcomes:

- Ethics, Standards and Values
- Advocacy Skills
- Legal Knowledge, Justice and the Rule of Law
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Preparation for Pupillage, Career Development and Wellbeing

At Gray's, we make these Qualifying Sessions stimulating and relevant, equipping you with the knowledge and skills you will need from day one.



A Member's story:

"Mooting at Gray's is immensely helpful in achieving your potential as a confident advocate. KCs and junior barristers are eager to give everyone constructive feedback, which is a great way to develop the skills that will become part of our daily life after Call."

Massimo Lando - Called 2022



Our Residential Advocacy & Ethics Course

Few abilities are more central to the barrister's profession, and few experiences more exhilarating and terrifying, than advocacy. In court, you will hold the fate of your client in your hands. Lives, livelihoods, freedom and reputation will all rest upon the power and skill with which you wield your words.

Twice a year we hold our Residential Advocacy & Ethics Course, in York and in the beautiful surroundings of Cumberland Lodge, in Windsor Great Park.

Practising Members of the Inn will work with you, guiding you through exercises in cross-examination, examination in chief and final submissions. They will provide one-on-one feedback sessions, identifying your strengths, and particular areas to work on to build and develop your skills.

Our trainers will also help you explore the ethical side of the barrister's role. Through a series of role play you will identify ethical issues and consider what appropriate actions a barrister should take.

Experience the adrenaline-rush of advocacy.

It is an extraordinary opportunity for Gray's Inn students and the courses are extremely popular. They bring together Members of all degrees of experience and seniority, for a weekend that is enjoyable and fun, yet very valuable in preparing for the Bar.



A Member's story:

"I was fortunate enough to live in the Inn as a scholar during my Bar Course year. Nothing quite motivates you to work for your final Bar exams like the knowledge that you live in a building that, for hundreds of years, has housed countless scholars that all managed to get through the Bar in the end. If they all managed it, we will too!"

Samantha O'Brien O'Reilly - Called 2019



Investing in
your future

Moot Competition, 2023

Develop your talent and your network

At Gray's Inn we create each training event with two purposes in mind. The first is to equip you with the skills and knowledge you will need to excel in your career. The second purpose may seem less tangible, but to us it is no less important. It is this: we want to help you become part of the community of practitioners that can help spark your career, and make friends and connections that will last for life. Through these events you will forge valuable relationships, both with other Members and with the Inn itself. And that is a good thing for all of us.

22

Make the connections that will spark your career.



Prep4Practice, 2023



Education Day

Our Education Day is held annually in March on a Saturday, there is a mock trial at the Royal Courts of Justice where you will have the chance to examine and cross-examine witnesses in a real court, in front of a real judge, and receive feedback on your advocacy from the Inn's accredited advocacy trainers.

Prep4Practice, 2023



Prep4Practice, 2023

Mooting Events

Mooting is exciting and challenging. It provides an ideal opportunity to practise advocacy “on your feet” – a skill that is fundamental to your life as a barrister. In addition, we know that scholarship and pupillage interviewing panels like to see mooring listed on your applications. At Gray’s Inn we are serious about mooring and take pride in running a whole host of mooring events for our Members. We have mooring workshops, speed moots and senior moots throughout the year. We also run an internal mooring competition, in which you have the chance to take home the £1,500 Nicholls Prize.

Prep4Practice

At Gray’s, we host regular day and evening sessions to help you brush up on the practical knowledge and skills you need for practice. You will receive advice from judges and get a chance to put forward your submissions. If you opt to attend the day sessions, you will join your trainers for lunch in Hall afterwards – a great opportunity to network. If you choose the later sessions, you can rub shoulders with senior barristers and trainers and build valuable connections at the evening receptions.



A Member's story:

“During the final of the Gray’s Inn mooring competition, about three seconds into my first point, I was subjected to continuous, ‘robust’ judicial intervention. I jettisoned my prepared script and the clichéd phrases which I had thought made me sound like a ‘proper’ barrister. I hadn’t finished making my second point when the light came on to signal my time was up. I sat down, deflated. When I was announced as the winner I was both shocked and convinced there was a mistake. This experience taught me to view advocacy as a conversation rather than a monologue, to always deal with judicial intervention rather than deflect it, and that it’s wise to make your best point first. I’m still terrible at timekeeping.”

Laura Moys – Called 2008

Career development at Gray's

Your achievements are our achievements

Gray's Inn is its Members. As your career progresses and you make your mark, you will be helping to write the next chapters in our Inn's illustrious history.

Once you become a Member of Gray's, you will find Members of the Inn from every level of experience and area of practice on hand to support you at every step.

24

One-to-one support.
When and where you
need it.



Hillary Call, 2024

Mentoring – developing your individual skills and interests

At Gray's Inn you are, first and foremost, an individual. Whilst providing training and guidance in the fundamental knowledge and skills required of the profession, we also aim to help you pursue your own particular passion or area of practice.

As a student of the Inn, our Mentoring Scheme pairs you with a barrister local to you who practises in whichever area of law you are interested in pursuing further. Your personal mentor will be on hand to offer you one-to-one support when and where you need it.

Our commitment to mentoring our Members does not stop when you qualify. Being a Member of Gray's Inn lasts a lifetime. Our programme extends to pupils and new practitioners, so that as a Member of Gray's you are supported throughout your career.

Master Peter Coulson
Hillary Call, 2024



Wellbeing

Preparing for the challenges of practice

You will join a profession of considerable responsibility and where your livelihood depends on your ability to perform. You will be expected to think on your feet, to succeed under great pressure, and your personal and intellectual skills will be tested.

The path to qualifying and practising as a barrister holds many challenges but it can be hugely rewarding.

The ability to meet the challenges along the way is greatly enhanced by an awareness of mental health issues and a willingness to nurture this important aspect of your personal and professional life.

One of the benefits of being a Member of Gray's Inn is that you belong to a community of practitioners who have been through the same experiences and can help. You never need to deal with stress or withstand the pressures and challenges alone

Gray's Inn plays an active part in Bar wide initiatives to support barristers through the challenges. Throughout the year we hold a number of events covering good practice in mental health with some focusing on specific aspects such as resilience and dealing with rejection. There are also small wellbeing gatherings and our mentors will always be on hand to chat. We also run fitness classes in the Inn's private gardens, the Walks, to assist with physical wellbeing.

25



A Member's story:

"I was looking around the room at an Inn function and noted all the friendly faces of the staff and barristers I recognised from events, training sessions and daily life within the Inn. I vividly remember thinking: *I really am so lucky to have this. Gray's has become a home away from home for me.*"

Stephen Innes – Called 2000



Student Residential, York 2024

Opportunities to be hands-on

Foundations

Foundations is a new scheme for 2025, offering students three targeted sessions each autumn. Focussing on the skills, knowledge and experiences you will need to secure pupillage, and delivered through one-to-one online meetings, it will help you make the most of existing opportunities, approach the Gateway process with confidence, and provide you with the platform to achieve your potential.

The scheme feeds into the Inn's existing careers service, which has been designed to provide tailored support throughout the pupillage application process.

Marshalling

Generations of Gray's Inn Members have learned through hard-won experience that becoming a barrister is as much a practical craft as it is an intellectual discipline. It takes a combination of academic skill and hands-on experience of court life to become a truly effective barrister.

Through the Inn's Marshalling Scheme we are able to connect you with a member of the Inn who sits on the Bench. This offers you an excellent chance to gain insight into the role of the judiciary, court procedure and styles of advocacy and will really help you make your mark.



IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES

CVs, pupillage applications and mock interviews

If you have the talent and the drive, then at Gray's Inn we really want you to succeed, and we will do whatever we can to help. To that end, we will arrange for you to meet Gray's Inn barristers practising in the area of law you are pursuing for one-to-one advice sessions.

They will review your CV and/or pupillage applications, and give you feedback to help you make them even better. They will also be available by email afterwards for follow-up advice.

Interviewing for pupillage sessions

If you have an interview for pupillage scheduled, get in touch with us and we will arrange a mock interview to help finesse your presentation.

Personal coaching sessions strengthen your pupillage application to ensure the greatest chance of success.



A Member's story:

"The most valuable part of the court pupillage was being able to discuss life at the Bar with the judges as well as getting advice from them as to what they expected to see from advocates. This gave me an insight into the profession that I would not have got from a mini-pupillage."

Alexander-James Calder – Student



Experience Gray's Inn

Get to know us

Before you embark on a career as a barrister, one of the first things you should do is review the Inns of Court. You might think exploring the websites will suffice. Certainly you will find pictures of the buildings, read about famous and distinguished alumni, learn about applications and scholarships in that way – but joining an Inn is a decision that can dramatically shape your future. It can spark opportunities and forge relationships that will last a lifetime.

At Gray's, we believe there is no substitute for seeing us in person, before you make your decision. By experiencing the culture and meeting people face-to-face, you will be in a much better position to decide which Inn to choose.

To help, we have developed a number of ways to make it easier for you to get to know us.



A Member's story:

"I applied to Gray's Inn because I thought it gave me the best chance of winning a scholarship of a significant value that would make a difference, on the basis of the funds they stated they could allocate to each scholar."

Geogina Tobolewska - Student



Come to Gray's Inn

Schedule a visit

A visit to the Inn offers the ideal opportunity to get a feel for the organisation that may become the base and support network for your future career. If you book a tour, a knowledgeable expert from our Careers and Scholarship Team and a current Gray's Inn scholar will be on hand when you arrive to give you a relaxed, informal introduction to the Inn with time to ask questions and discuss your career aspirations. If you attend one of our events, you will meet barristers, find out more about the profession and explore the various pathways to the Bar. If you are thinking about becoming a barrister, a visit is one thing we would strongly recommend for every would-be applicant.

University Advocacy Day

University Advocacy Days are for undergrads (and post grads) interested in becoming a barrister. Leading silks will lead you through an interactive discussion on the art of advocacy.

What would you do? In small groups coached by barristers and judges, you will analyse cases and consider a range of ethical dilemmas that barristers might face when working with clients, witnesses, and opposing counsel. You will get on your feet to make opening submissions, examine witnesses and give closing speeches. You will learn about the advocate's duty to the client and the court. We'll also spend time explaining what membership at Gray's means for you: our career services, education and training opportunities and scholarships.

There is no cost for attending the University Advocacy Day and we will substantially subsidise your travel costs.



Mixed Messes

A proud tradition of the Inn is the Mixed Messes. The Treasurer invites guest speakers to provide an inspirational and entertaining, pre-dinner lecture on a legal subject relevant to your studies. Speakers have included Lady Hale, Lady Justice Sarah Falk, Hugo Keith KC, Emma Price, HHJ Wendy Joseph KC, Michael Beloff KC and many more. Following these lectures, barristers and judges (from all levels and specialisations of law) will host you at a dinner in Hall in groups of four known as a Mess.



31



As well as being great fun, Mixed Messes offer you a valuable opportunity to make connections with members of the Bar and judiciary. These senior Members will be happy to answer your questions and tell you more about what it's like to practise at the Bar. At Gray's Inn, we want to focus on the quality of the conversation, nothing else.

“The Mixed Messes are amazing experiences. The mentors are very friendly and hearing Lady Hale speak was completely surreal.”

Oluwaseun Adekoya, Called 2021



More opportunities to connect

Lectures

Gray's Inn offers a full programme of regular lectures, some of which are open to all (not just our Members) and you are very welcome to attend.

As well as hearing from some of the country's most senior lawyers, after every lecture there is a drinks reception where you can share your reactions and chat about the Inn, the Bar and your plans with more of our Members.

Online Scholarships Q&A

Prior to the GDL and Bar Course application deadlines we host online Q&A sessions. Ask us your questions about the application process and build your confidence in your application for funding.

Online events

We host live webinars, as well as scholarship information sessions, and often release recordings of our lectures. Keep an eye on our website for details.

Bar Societies and law fairs

We liaise with University Bar Societies to support a range of events at the Inn and near you. We also attend law and pupillage fairs throughout the year.

If you would like to discuss a collaboration with your Bar Society, our dedicated outreach team would love to hear from you.



Mixed Messes 2022

Miscellany

Miscellany is the Inn's annual Christmas show. It is organised by, and stars, the Inn's Members, featuring everyone from students to Supreme Court judges. It is open to everyone to attend (though tickets sell out fast) and provides an extraordinary opportunity to meet senior barristers and members of the judiciary 'off-duty.'

Each year's show has a theme: recent Miscellany titles include 'From Gray's with Love' (a Bond themed thriller), 'Gray's Inn Tights' (a Robin Hood themed romp) and 'Gray's Inn Saddles' (a Wild West shoot-out). The 2018 production, was 'Gray's in Space – in space no one can hear you sing.'

The final show script is normally only written an hour or so before the performance, which often adds to the entertainment value!



Miscellany 2022

Association of Gray's Inn Students

What is AGIS? The Association of Gray's Inn Students Committee is the student voice of the Inn.

Comprised of current Bar Course students, Members of the AGIS Committee serve as representatives at Bar Course providers both in London and on Circuit.

The aims of AGIS are:

- to promote, co-ordinate and represent the interests and activities of Gray's Inn students
- to provide a medium for the communication of opinions between the students and the Bench of Gray's Inn and between the students of Gray's Inn and the providers of the Bar Course
- to promote co-operation among Members for social, cultural, and intellectual purposes

The annual AGIS Summer and Winter Parties are always a highlight of the calendar - popular events where you can relax, unwind, and enjoy being part of a welcoming community.



AGIS Winter Party. 2022

Gray's Inn and social responsibility

Individuals within a community

At Gray's Inn, we consider every Member as an individual who both contributes to, and benefits from, a wider community. We view the role of our Inn in much the same way. We are a distinctive society, complete with our own culture and values and at the same time, we exist at the heart of British legal and social order. As such, we have a strong belief in outreach and social responsibility and our Members are active in all areas of community life.

Improving social mobility at the Bar: Griffin Access Programme (GAP)

We advocate for a profession where the brightest, best and most motivated minds in every generation are able to follow their calling and become barristers, irrespective of circumstance.

GAP is our vehicle for promoting social mobility at the Bar. It is an opportunity for talented young people to try practical debating and learn the skills of advocacy and persuasion. Students come from across the country, having first been identified by their schools as having aptitude and potential, but insufficient access to opportunity.

Through knowledge and skills-based workshops, culminating in a mock trial at the Inn, our barrister and student Member help to empower underrepresented youngsters to fulfil their potential.

City of London Scholarships

GAP and LEDLET graduates are eligible to apply for a City of London Scholarship, which provides scholars with financial support in each year of their undergraduate study, along with access to our careers service.

LEDLET

We are partnered with the Lord Edmund-Davies Legal Education Trust (LEDLET), a charity established in 2013 to support young people in Wales who are interested in entering the legal profession. We host their London summer school each July, with our Griffin mentors delivering workshops to prepare students for a debate in front of a senior member of the judiciary.



Empowering underrepresented youngsters to develop their talent and fulfil their potential.



A Member's story:

"The GAP represented more than just an opportunity to speak with barristers – it was a gateway to the entire profession.

Coming from a low-income background, and being the first in my family to attend university, the Bar appeared mysterious and exclusive. Now, through the GAP and the City of London Scholarship, I have spoken with countless legal professionals – covering everything from CV support, to application preparation, and even judge marshalling (shadowing).

The value Gray's Inn offers is innumerable, but I best measure it by the warmth I feel every time I interact with the team!"

Sophia Choudhury

A pioneering outreach initiative: Vocalise

Giving prisoners and young offenders a positive way to communicate

The ultimate aim of Vocalise is to put ourselves (at least partly) out of a job.

In so many of the cases that come to trial in the criminal courts, poor or inappropriate communication can play a crucial role. If even one of the violent or other criminal incidents that take place every day could have been solved with words, the world would be a better place. This is where Vocalise comes in.

You could be a Vocalise mentor

Following an eight-week training course from September to December, successful students qualify as Vocalise mentors who then go on to deliver debate and communication training courses to prisoners and youth offenders in HMPs and YOIs across the greater south eastern region. From Brixton to Wormwood Scrubs to Feltham, this is an extraordinary experience and opportunity for everyone involved.

“One of the best things
I’ve ever done. I’m
forever grateful to Gray’s
for supporting such a
special project.”

Bradley Lewis

VOCALISE

Vocalise is Gray’s Inn’s award-winning debate training programme for prisoners and youth offenders. Founded in 2010, this innovative programme continues to be led by Gray’s Inn student Members. Vocalise mentors and alumni contribute to this important work throughout the year.



A Member's story:

“The Brixton Vocalise group had been in training for six months, culminating in a debate against Cambridge. Prison staff and inmates came out in droves to support. We insisted on hilariously ‘weird’ traditions like making ‘points of information’, pretending to doff hats and calling each other ‘learned friends’. The Brixton inmates won the debate, impressing everyone with their passion and eloquence. I watched people transform with confidence and realised that being heard was pivotal.”

Maria Gherman – Called 2013

Contact us

Get in touch now to arrange a visit

graysinn.org.uk/joining/connect

Gray's Inn, Education Department,
8 South Square, London, WC1R 5ET

careers@graysinn.org.uk

0207 458 7900

Join the conversation

Keep up-to-date with the latest news from the Inn and the Education Department on social media.

f @HonSocGraysInn

in LinkedIn (search for Gray's Inn)

x @HonSocGraysInn

yt YouTube (search for Gray's Inn)

ig @HonSocGraysInn



Trinity Call 2025

