

SERLE COURT

COMPETENCY MATRIX FOR SELECTION OF PUPILS

This document sets out the qualities that we think make an outstanding barrister. We look for these qualities, or the potential to develop them, when selecting our pupils. The stages of the selection process at which each criterion is assessed are indicated in the columns on the right hand side.

	Criterion	Application Form	SJT	Round 1	Round 2
1.	Advocacy and communication skills (written)	✓			
	(a) Clarity (<i>adopts a logical structure to documents; is able to create a chronological narrative; exercises judgment about what needs to be included in a document; is able to explain complex matters simply; emphasises the important points; formats documents so they are easy to read and understand</i>)				
	(b) Persuasion (<i>engages the interest of the reader; makes statements that are backed up by evidence and principle; presents matters fairly; in an example or a case study emphasises the good points and effectively mitigates the bad points; avoids rhetoric and hyperbole</i>)				
	(c) Register (<i>appreciates the intended purpose of the document and its audience and chooses content and language appropriately</i>)				
2.	Advocacy and communication skills (oral)	✓		✓	✓
	(a) Clarity (<i>adopts a logical structure to any oral advocacy or communication; is able to create a chronological narrative; exercises judgment about what needs to be said; is able to explain complex matters simply; emphasises the important points; monitors the reactions of others to ensure they have understood</i>)				
	(b) Persuasion (<i>engages the interest of the audience; makes statements that are backed up by evidence and principle; presents matters fairly; asks questions that elicit relevant answers; in an example or case study, emphasises the good points and effectively mitigates the bad points; avoids rhetoric and hyperbole</i>)				
	(c) Register (<i>shows awareness of the situation and chooses content and language appropriately</i>)				
	(d) Listening skills (<i>listens to other people; allows others time to speak, does not cut other people off when they are speaking; takes time to ensure that what has been said has been understood</i>)				
	(e) Cognitive flexibility (<i>able to appraise merit of what is said by others and decide whether own position needs adapting; chooses the right respects in which to adapt own position, does so attractively</i>)				

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3.	Factual comprehension and analysis		✓	✓	✓
	(a) Assimilation (<i>is able to sort the relevant from the irrelevant; is able to comprehend an overall chronological narrative from diffuse or non-chronological data; is able to identify gaps in the information provided; is able to identify errors in the understanding of others; pays attention to detail</i>)				
	(b) Volume (<i>can read and understand large volumes of data, can familiarise themselves where necessary with previously unfamiliar concepts, is able to organise a body of information to understand it in the most efficient way</i>)				
	(c) Language (<i>sensitive to the precise language used and its implications</i>)				
4.	Intellectual ability and capacity for legal reasoning	✓		✓	✓
	(a) Demonstrates potential for sound legal research and for sophisticated comprehension of the law (<i>evidence of strong intellect and research capability is apparent; interprets any texts supplied soundly; is able to identify ambiguities and gaps in such texts; any existing legal knowledge displayed is sound</i>)				
	(b) Demonstrates potential in the application of principles to fact (<i>is able to say how any principle posited applies in a given factual situation</i>)				
	(c) Reasoning (<i>is able to reason logically from existing principles in novel situations, is able to identify uncertainties in the application of such principles; is able to defend their conclusions; is able to form a view on the reasoning of others</i>).				
5.	Judgment		✓	✓	✓
	(a) Common sense (<i>grasps the merits of a given situation; understands the likely motivations and explanations for the actions of witnesses and parties in any case study; is able to see things from the viewpoint of a non-lawyer; has a good sense for the likely outcome</i>)				
	(b) Practicality (<i>can formulate a plan to achieve a result; is realistic about what can be achieved in given circumstances; thinks about the real-life impact of a proposed course of action; thinks laterally and creatively about how results can be achieved</i>)				
	(c) Commercial awareness (<i>understands the client's objectives in any case study; is familiar with, or shows potential for understanding how different trades, businesses and industries operate; weighs up the costs and benefits of a</i>				

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	<i>proposed course of action; thinks about the non-legal impact of a given course of action).</i>				
6.	Organisation	✓	✓	✓	✓
	(a) Management of workload (<i>shows ability to juggle multiple obligations; prioritises tasks; meets deadlines; foresees problems that may arise and plans accordingly; anticipates clients' needs and actively seeks to meet them</i>)				
	(b) Response to pressure (<i>remains calm; maintains quality of work at all times; reacts well to unexpected changes;)</i>				
7.	Personal qualities and interpersonal skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
	(a) Trustworthiness (<i>keeps promises; maintains confidence</i>)				
	(b) Honesty and integrity (<i>is unfailingly truthful; holds themselves to the higher standards expected of professionals; resists inappropriate pressure; ; demonstrates courage and fairmindedness</i>)				
	(c) Commitment, dedication and conscientiousness (<i>cares greatly about delivering the best possible result for a client in any case study and does their very best to achieve it; cares about and contributes to the general good, or the well-being of people and organisations</i>)				
	(d) Resilience (<i>shows ability to absorb setbacks in whatever form; reacts appropriately</i>)				
	(e) Empathy (<i>capable of seeing things from another's point of view, e.g. clients, opponents, solicitors, judges, clerks, court staff, and takes this into account in their work</i>)				
	(f) Teamwork (<i>co-operates with others, takes into account the views of others, can delegate and be delegated to, can switch between working with different groups of people</i>)				
	(g) Personability (<i>engaging in whatever way their personality dictates; shows adaptability and commitment; is able to put others at ease; conducts themselves appropriately to the setting</i>)				
	(h) Reflectiveness (<i>thinks about what went right and wrong; is committed to continuous improvement and professional development</i>)				