



Which panel to apply for:

Is it possible to apply for more than one level of Panel?

No. Applicants should determine which level of panel (London A, B or C) they wish to apply for and apply for one panel only. In choosing which of the panels to apply to, candidates must make a careful decision based on which best suits their level of expertise and experience. If you have been or are already on the London C Panel, you cannot reapply for the London C Panel. You must apply for the London B panel. The same applies in relation to London B Panel. You must apply for A Panel. You cannot reapply for the B panel. Please be aware you may only reapply to the London A Panel.

The *Information for Candidates* that forms part of the application pack includes details of the different levels of panel and the eligibility criteria.

I am a member of the Regional Panel, but my practice is national. Is it possible to apply for the London Panel as well?

Advocates may not be a member of both the London and Regional Panels, so if you are on the Regional Panel and are appointed to the London Panel you must resign from the Regional Panel.

However, you may be a member of either the London or the Regional Panels and a member of the Public International Law (PIL) Panel.

I am a Special Advocate. Is it possible to apply for the Attorney General's Panels of Junior Counsel as well? -

There is no barrier to being on both the Attorney General's Panel of Special Advocates and the Attorney General's Panels of Junior Counsel. Please note, however, that GLD's national security teams may not instruct barristers on the Attorney General's Panels of Junior Counsel to do national security work if they are also on the Attorney General's Panel of Special Advocates.

Eligibility:

I am an employed barrister; can I apply to become a member of Panel Counsel?

Yes, employed barristers can apply. Both employed barristers and solicitors with Higher Rights of Audience can apply to Panel but if an employed barrister or solicitor with Higher Rights of Audience are successful, before your appointment takes effect, you will need to confirm the following in writing.

- permission from your employer to take on work from outside your employer's practice.
- a commitment from your employer to allow you sufficient time to work on any instructions through the Panel.

- You have appropriate insurance for your work as a Panel Member.
- You have adequate clerking-style administrative support (either provided by your employer or yourself separately).
- if an employed barrister or a solicitor with Higher Rights of Audience, you have the necessary rights of audience to represent government in all the Courts of England and Wales.
- a clear conflicts policy and process for considering potential conflict with your firm's/employer's other clients and work.

No one from my firm/set of chambers is on the panel, is it worth my time applying?

Yes. Each candidate is considered on their individual merits – not based on where they practice.

I am a criminal specialist, can I apply?

Yes. We do want applicants capable of advising departments where criminal issues arise in public and occasionally private law cases. Candidates should draw out any relevant experience they have in relation to this particular practice area/this particular area of work as well as evidence of their ability, aptitude and willingness to work effectively outside their specialist area in their application.

I specialise in one area of law, can I apply?

Yes. We do need specialists who work in a single area where there is a high demand for that area within government. However, demonstrating ability, aptitude, and willingness to work effectively in more than one area is extremely valuable.

I do a lot of pro bono work so can I refer to this in my application?

Pro bono work can provide useful evidence and you are welcome to include it in your advocacy and advisory examples and as evidence of your written work. You can also include this work in your list of advocacy and advisory cases.

Completing the form:

You ask for a case list; will a diary printout suffice?

No. A diary printout will not provide the information the selection board want to see. They want to understand each candidate's current practice.

Two tables within the application form are provided to enable you to supply this information. The advocacy table asks you to list the key cases you have undertaken over the past 12 months, detailing the areas of law covered; the courts appeared in; and whether or not you were led. If you deal with numerous similar cases each month, just one summary entry encompassing all similar cases for that month would suffice. If you have been out of practice for all or part of that period, for example on parental leave/career break then it is acceptable to go back further in time.

The advisory table asks you to list the key pieces of advice that you have given over the past 12 months, detailing the area of law covered; the court in relation to which the advice was given (if applicable), whether it was a sole or joint opinion, and very briefly the nature of the advice. If you deal with numerous similar cases each month, just one summary entry encompassing all similar cases for that month would suffice.

The application asks for details of advocacy work, but my specialism rarely requires this, can I still apply?

Yes. Most Panel Counsel will be expected to take on a range of cases that will invariably involve advocacy work, or at least an appreciation of how a case might play in court. However, where the selection board is looking for specialist counsel, for example, tax or charities, it recognises that in certain cases, extensive advocacy experience may be less relevant.

How detailed should my advocacy and advisory examples be?

The selection board want to see examples that showcase the range and complexity of each candidate's experience. **It is therefore important that you clearly explain the role you played in the examples you provide.** The need to anonymise examples is understood, but this should be done in such a way that the reader can still follow the narrative.

Please be aware there is a maximum word count of 1000 words in total for your three advocacy examples combined with your advocacy lesson learned and a maximum word count of 1000 words in total for your three advisory examples combined with your advisory lesson learned. Candidates are encouraged to use the full word count.

What do you mean by a lesson learned?

We are asking candidates to answer a separate question on an advocacy and advisory lesson learned (albeit part of the same 1000-word count). **You are not required to include lessons learned in respect of each of your advocacy and advisory examples.** When answering this question, candidates should ask themselves, what insightful lesson have I learned/reflected on in recent years?

The selection board want applicants to identify a case from which they have gained experience that they have been able to take away and use in other matters. The lesson learned should not be too basic or perfunctory, i.e., the need to prepare for cross-examination. Candidates should provide evidence of insight and self-reflection. Please bear in mind you have a maximum of 1000 words for your advocacy examples and advocacy lesson learned. Similarly, you have a maximum of 1000 words for your advisory examples and advisory lesson learned.

What sort of Opinion should I submit?

Bearing in mind that the selection board does not conduct interviews, it is important that the example of written work submitted fully reflects each candidate's abilities. The opinion (or the skeleton see further below) is the only direct evidence that the selection board sees of the applicant's work. A recent example of a well-structured piece of written work dealing with difficult topics in a manner that the reader finds reasonably easy to understand is more likely to create a favourable impression than those which do not. In making your choice of opinion you should bear in mind the following considerations

- It should contain an element of legal analysis rather than just be based entirely on issues of fact or procedure.
- If you are putting in something that is more than 3 years old, then you should explain why you have nothing more recent that is suitable.
- You do not want something that is too short. Neither should the opinion be too long. For those applying for the A and B Panel the opinion submitted should be no longer

than **20 pages** in length and for those applying for the C Panel the opinion submitted should be no longer than **15 pages** in length. You may also want to consider whether the length of the opinion submitted would warrant a good summary. We are looking at the quality rather than length, and a shorter piece of written work that hits the mark may be effective in demonstrating conciseness.

- Our preference is not for joint opinions but in the case of a jointly signed document, you must confirm that it was principally your own work.

I do not have a recent opinion to provide as a written work example, can I provide an alternative?

Where a candidate does not have any recent examples of written work, the board would find it helpful to understand why. You may submit a skeleton but on balance we would prefer an Opinion rather than a Skeleton. However, we are aware that in some areas of practice, applicants may have difficulties in providing one, in which case a Skeleton Argument will be perfectly acceptable, using the written work guidelines above.

What if I go over the word count on my Advocacy or Advisory sections, or on the government litigation question?

We ask candidates to aim to use the full word count of 400 words for the government litigation answer and 1000 words for both advocacy and advisory sections and for the number to be stated. If your answer goes over the word limits above the selection board will stop reading once the limit has been reached. If it goes considerably over, then this might call into question the candidate's judgement and ability to follow instructions.

I have no experience of working with government, what are you looking for in the response to the government litigation question?

The response to this question should indicate that the candidate has an appreciation for the special demands of working for government: focussing on the challenges that face those acting for government and how they would go about tackling those challenges **in their area of specialism**.

References:

What is the role of the referees?

Referees are not asked to be your supporter. Rather they are asked to provide evidence as to how you demonstrate the skills required as set out in the reference pro forma.

How many referees will I need?

Those applying to the London A Panel should provide five references, two of which should come from members of the judiciary.

Those applying to the London B Panel should provide three references, one of which should come from a member of the judiciary.

Those applying to the London C Panel should provide three references. We recommend that candidates, if possible, provide at least one reference from a member of the judiciary.

I conduct little advocacy so not all my referees can comment on my advocacy skills, will this affect my chances of success?

Advocacy is a fundamental part of the role of panel counsel. We would therefore expect at least one referee to speak in detail about an applicant's advocacy skills and experience. However, it is recognised that this may not always be possible because of the nature of the

litigation if the applicant is most regularly involved in areas such as: procurement; construction; IT; contractual/commercial disputes.

In such cases applicants may wish to consider submitting references from those who have observed them and can comment on their conduct during stages of the litigation process that do not involve advocacy.

Will my application still be considered if I do not have a judicial referee?

Yes. We recognise that for lawyers with limited post qualification experience, it may not be possible to find a judicial referee. However, the greater the advocacy experience of the applicant, the more the selection board might question why a judicial reference was not provided.

Is there a preference for a Circuit Judge or above instead of a Coroner as a judicial referee?

The most valuable judicial references are from those who have seen the candidates on their feet, preferably on more than one occasion. A reference from a Circuit Judge or Coroner who has clear experience of a candidate's ability in court is of greater assistance than a reference from a Supreme Court Judge who has not seen their advocacy skills in practice. A reference from an Arbitrator or Planning Inspector who has seen the candidate on their feet would serve the same purpose.

Can I use three judicial referees?

Three references from the Judiciary can be perfectly acceptable (but see below about the desirability of references from government lawyers).

Each reference, if chosen well, provides an opportunity to submit new and objective examples of clear and compelling evidence of an applicant's abilities.

Will my application still be considered if my referees do not include a government lawyer?

Yes. If a candidate has not done any government work and is unable to supply such a reference, this will not affect the application adversely.

Where a candidate has done a significant amount of government work, then it is usually a good idea that at least one of the references should come from a lawyer who has instructed them. The board may think it odd that government work features in either the case list or examples, but there is no reference from a government lawyer. A reference from an experienced government lawyer is better than one from an inexperienced one, simply because they will have a better idea of the standards expected from Panel Counsel.

Are there any persons I cannot ask to be my referee?

There is no one you cannot ask if you consider they are best placed to provide evidence of the skills required as set out in the reference pro forma. However, we do ask referees to disclose on their reference pro forma if they are:

- your former pupil supervisor or training principal
- a member or former member of your chambers or a partner, employee or associate or former partner, employee or associate of your firm or any organisation that employs you.

Evidence will be strongest from referees who have seen the applicant operating in their professional capacity (in court, in conference, or in writing).

I have approached more referees than are required, can they all be used to support my application?

No. If we receive more than the requested number of references (3 for London C and B Panels; 5 for London A Panel) we will contact the applicant and ask that they select the relevant number out of those available to support their application. The remaining references will not be seen by the selection board. If a preference is not offered, we will submit the first 3 or 5 received only.

One of my referees is on holiday and will not be able to submit a reference by the deadline, will a late reference be accepted?

Please email PanelCounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk if there will be a delay in the submission of a reference, and a member of the team will advise if it can still be included alongside your application.

One of my referees is now unable to provide a reference, can I use another one?

Yes. Not having a full set of references will put candidates at a disadvantage, so please email PanelCounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk if there is a need to identify an alternative referee.

Submitting an application:

Do I need to express an interest in making an application if I have previously applied?

Yes, you need to express an interest in each individual competition. Entry to each competition is by invitation only.

To register and receive the application pack, please email

PanelCounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk from your chambers/business email address, as opposed to a personal email account, stating which panel you are applying for. Panel Counsel Secretariat will send you the appropriate application pack.

How do I submit my application?

Completed applications should be emailed to PanelRecruitment@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Can I submit my application by post?

No. Forms must be submitted electronically to
PanelRecruitment@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Can my application form be uploaded in PDF format?

No. All forms must be submitted in **Word** format please.

Can the written example/case list be uploaded in PDF format?

No. All elements of the form must be submitted in one **Word** document format. If altering the format of one or any of the attachments from PDF to Word causes issues, applicants should email PanelCounsel@governmentlegal.gov.uk and a member of the team will make contact and offer assistance.

How will I know my application has been received?

All applications submitted via PanelRecruitment@governmentlegal.gov.uk will receive an automated message confirming receipt. Please retain this as proof of submission.

Will the Panel Counsel Secretariat chase me for missing information in my application?

The Panel Counsel Secretariat are unable to chase candidates for missing information from their application form. Please ensure you follow the checklist of questions at the end of the application form to ensure you are submitting a completed application form.

I will struggle to meet the published deadline; can I submit a late application?

No. We are unable to accept late applications.

When will I hear about the outcome of my application?

Candidates should be notified of the outcome of their application in August 2025.

January 2025