

Key Chambers Readers Policy

Purpose

To outline:

- the structure of readerships at Key Chambers;
- the process for members of Key Chambers to receive and consider applications to undertake a readership and to select successful candidates.

Goal

Key Chambers wants to be, and to be regarded as, the preeminent chambers in the ACT. An important part of achieving that objective is ensuring that we attract the best candidates to undertake a readership at Key Chambers and, ideally, become members of Key Chambers after concluding the readership.

The purpose of this Policy is to promote this goal by:

1. Setting structure around the readership year so that we actively support our readers to establish their career at the Bar in the most positive and productive way possible, including by developing their chosen areas of practice, building relationships with other barristers and exposing them to a variety of solicitors.
2. Establishing a clear process by which we receive and consider applications and select successful candidates to undertake readerships based on merit and in line with our broader goals of diversity and inclusion.
3. Designing a readership scholarship which provides financial support to readers for the duration of the readership year.

Structure of the readership

A readership at the preeminent chambers in the ACT will mean more than simply a room for a year at reduced rent. While the nature of each readership will necessarily need to adapt to the goals of the particular reader, the expectation is that members of Key Chambers will actively support a reader with the minimum measures set out below.

It is not expected that these will be onerous obligations for members but are a necessary part of ensuring that members are aware of the ways in which they might be able to involve

or assist the reader during the readership. It is anticipated that, other than in exceptional circumstances, Key Chambers will have only one reader at a time and members will easily be able to discharge these minimum measures.

1. Ordinarily, one member of Key Chambers will be the reader's tutor.¹ This may be as a second tutor alongside another barrister of the reader's choosing from a different chamber in Canberra or elsewhere.
2. Within the first month of commencing the readership, each member of Key Chambers will endeavour to have a brief informal discussion with the reader to understand his or her areas of interest, experience and desires for the readership year and beyond.
3. Key Chambers will promote the reader's arrival by:
 - a. asking the ACT Bar Association to include an announcement in its member broadcasts;
 - b. making an announcement via its own email broadcasts and/or social media account (if any) such as LinkedIn;
 - c. the clerk informing solicitors during day-to-day discussions;
 - d. addition of the reader's information to the Key Chambers website.
4. The reader will be invited to have a speaking role as part of at least one Key Chambers' event during the readership year, such as a CPD seminar or social event to which solicitors are invited.
5. During the readership year, each member of Key Chambers will, where practicable, make the effort to:
 - a. invite the reader to accompany the member to court, mediation or conferences or to otherwise be involved in a matter (e.g. devilling work) on at least one occasion; and
 - b. introduce the reader to at least one solicitor who may be able to brief the reader in any of the reader's areas of interest.
6. While the reader's tutor will have primary responsibility in offering guidance to the reader, other members of Key Chambers will, consistent with the usual traditions of the profession, be available to offer guidance and advice to the reader when needed throughout the readership year.

¹ It is at the Management Committees discretion to waive this requirement in exceptional circumstances.

7. It is anticipated that readers will apply to become members or licensees of Key Chambers at the end of their readership. There will be no obligation on Key Chambers to accept any such application. However, where possible, readerships should be offered with due regard to the capacity of Key Chambers to accommodate more members and, if there is no prospect for a prospective reader being accommodated as a member or licensee at the conclusion of the readership, the prospective reader will be informed of this before the readership commences.

Application process

1. Readerships will usually commence in either June or September (after conclusion of the NSW Bar Readers Practice Course). While timing will vary from year to year, it is expected that applications for a June readership will be received no later than the mid-March and applications for a September readership will be received no later than mid-July.
2. Whether an application round is run in a given year will need to be determined by the Committee in consultation with the Clerk and members of Key Chambers, having regard to room availability and other forward-planning considerations. There is no obligation on Key Chambers to run an application round every year. The aim should be to select only one reader for any given readership year unless exceptional circumstances warrant a departure from that position and accepting that there may be periods of overlap between a reader finishing a readership and a new reader commencing.
3. Key Chambers will announce an application round for readerships on its website and in such other avenues as the members consider appropriate. The advertisement will ideally occur several months before the closing date for applications.
4. The advertisement for a readership application round will detail (i) the information required to be submitted as part of the application and (ii) the criteria by which members of Key Chambers will assess the applications and select the successful candidate.
 - i. *Information required to be submitted* (to be submitted in writing by email to the Clerk of Key Chambers):
 - current resume;
 - academic transcript;
 - name and contact details of three professional referees;
 - nomination of member of Key Chambers to be tutor;
 - cover letter outlining why the reader wishes to read at Key Chambers, what attributes and qualities the reader can bring to Key Chambers and otherwise addressing the selection criteria.

ii. Selection criteria: (in no particular order)

- academic performance;
- relevant work experience;
- the character and personality of the applicant and whether such accord with that of Key Chambers; whether, and if so how, the applicant can add to the diversity of Key Chambers including (but not limited to) practice areas, gender or ethnicity;
- commitment to the principles expounded in the Law Council of Australia [Diversity and Equality Charter](#) and to the Equitable Briefing Policy.

5. Applications will be distributed to members of Key Chambers on a confidential basis. Input and comment on applications will be sought from members.
 - i. Dependent upon the number of applications, the Committee, with input from the members, will determine which candidates (if any) to interview.
 - ii. If $\frac{3}{4}$ of members agree that there is no suitable candidate from the applications, it will be determined that no interview for readership will be conducted for that application round.
 - iii. At least two members of the Committee will interview the selected candidates. The Clerk will organise the logistics of these interviews.
 - iv. If the interviewing Committee members feel the applicant meets the selection criteria after interview, one nominated member of the Key Chambers Management Committee will conduct reference checks. The member conducting the reference checks should report back to members on any issues arising from the reference checks.
6. Once the interviews and reference checks have been conducted, the interviewing members are to make a joint recommendation to members of Key Chambers as to the successful candidate. The recommended candidate will be the successful candidate if $\frac{3}{4}$ of members of Key Chambers agree to accept the joint recommendation. For the avoidance of doubt, a recommendation can be that no offer of readership be made to any candidate.
7. If a successful candidate has been selected, a member of Key Chambers will inform him or her and make an offer of readership in writing.

Direct Applications outside of advertised readership openings

Should an application for Readership be received outside the application process outlined above, the following process shall apply:

1. Applicants shall provide to the Clerk of Key Chambers in writing, via email:
 - current resume;
 - academic transcript;
 - name and contact details of three professional referees;
 - nomination of member of Key Chambers to be tutor;
 - cover letter outlining why the reader wishes to read at Key Chambers, what attributes and qualities the reader can bring to Key Chambers and otherwise addressing the selection criteria.
2. The following selection criteria shall apply:
 - academic performance;
 - relevant work experience;
 - the character and personality of the applicant and whether such accord with that of Key Chambers; whether, and if so how, the applicant can add to the diversity of Key Chambers including (but not limited to) practice areas, gender or ethnicity;
 - commitment to the principles expounded in the Law Council of Australia [Diversity and Equality Charter](#) and to the Equitable Briefing Policy.
3. The application shall be distributed to members of Key Chambers for their consideration.
 - If the Key Chambers Management Committee agree by majority to interview the applicant, at least two of the Key Chambers Management Committee will interview the applicant and will provide members of Key Chambers with feedback on that interview.
 - If the interviewing Committee members feel the applicant meets the selection criteria after interview, one nominated member of the Key Chambers Management Committee will conduct reference checks. The member conducting the reference checks should report back to members on any issues arising from the reference checks.
4. Once the interviews and reference checks have been conducted, the interviewing members are to make a joint recommendation to members of Key Chambers as to the successful candidate. The recommended candidate will be the successful candidate if $\frac{3}{4}$ of members of Key Chambers agree to accept the joint recommendation. For the avoidance of doubt, a recommendation can be that no offer of readership be made to any candidate.

5. The applicant will be notified of their success or otherwise in writing.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed from time to time as required to determine if it meets the needs of Key Chambers as relates to readers.

Key Chambers Management Committee

Updated 12 June 2019