

UCL CAJ Judge Shadowing Scheme: Guidance for Students

About the Scheme:

This scheme is intended to run similarly to judicial marshalling, a programme where students will accompany a judge for a half/full day to gain insight into the role of the judiciary, court procedure, and the reality of cases on the ground. Participating in this scheme is an excellent opportunity for your personal and professional development.

Judges participating in this scheme are doing so on a completely voluntary basis. We are grateful for their time and willingness to support UCL Laws students. Please approach this scheme with professionalism and courtesy.

While you are attending this scheme, you will be representatives of the UCL Faculty of Laws. In addition to acting with professionalism and courtesy, we expect that you will attend hearings on time, and maintain confidentiality where appropriate.

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide further information and support about the scheme and outline expectations so you can make the most out of this opportunity.

What to Expect on the Day

In advance of your shadowing date, you will be notified by the Projects Coordinator, Ram Sabaratnam, of the date, time, and location of your placement. You will also be informed which judge you are shadowing.

On the day, dress smartly in 'business attire'. This will generally mean a dark suit or equivalent. If you do not feel you have any appropriate business attire, please get in touch with Ram Sabaratnam (ram.sabaratnam.19@ucl.ac.uk) as support may be available to ensure you have appropriate clothing.

Make sure you arrive on time, if not a little early, for your placement. Make sure you leave plenty of time to find the court and the right entrance. Some courts will have additional security in place so make sure you leave enough time as there can often be queues. Please make sure you bring photo ID with you such as a drivers' licence or passport. Courts can be busy and rather maze-like, so do ask for help if you are not sure where you are going.

On your allocated date, you will accompany the judge to their hearing(s). The nature of your experience may vary greatly depending on the kind of judge you are shadowing or which court or tribunal you are sitting in. However, in general you can expect to attend one or more hearings, see representations made by advocates and observe how the judge handles the case.

In general, following the hearing you will have time to discuss the case with the judge. Take the opportunity to ask questions!

You may wish to take notes during the hearing. Please check with the judge beforehand if that is ok. To minimise risk, please do not include any client names or any identifiable details relating to the case. While many hearings you attend will be public hearings, there is a possibility you will be attending a closed hearing. If you are unsure whether your case notes may contain confidential or personal information, please speak to a member of CAJ staff who can assist in disposing of any notes securely.

Please note that food and drink are not usually permitted in court rooms other than water. If there is a medical reason why you may need to eat or drink something other than water during your placement, please discuss this with Ram (contact details above). There will be a break to get lunch. If you are there all day.

Scheduling

Students will be allocated shadowing dates based on their availability and the availability of the judges. Due to the unpredictable nature of casework, we are unable to guarantee students will be able to observe a particular type of case or area of law.

Please remember the scheme is dependent on a judge's availability which is subject to change as well as case and clients which can be unpredictable. In the event your placement needs to be rescheduled, you will be notified as soon as possible and we will liaise with you and the judge to find a suitable alternative date. It rests on the discretion of participating judges to decide if there is an alternative date on which the student can attend the hearing. CAJ will facilitate any communication required between the student and the judge in this regard. It should be noted, however, that rescheduling may not always be feasible, depending on participating judges' own schedules and the nature of the hearings.

If a student accepts a shadowing opportunity and then cancels at short notice and without good reason, this may affect their ability to undertake similar opportunities in the future.

Additional Information Requirements:

Some courts and/or judges may have additional security requirements. As such, you may be asked to provide additional forms of identification (such as a copy of your drivers' licence or passport) ahead of your court/tribunal visit. If this is required, a member of CAJ team will get in touch to clarify what information is required and how it should be provided. Any documentation provided to CAJ will be securely stored by CAJ in accordance with UCL's data protection policies.

For more information about how UCL deals with personal information, please refer to the Privacy Notice for Students which can be found at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/privacy/ucl-student-privacy-notice>

Frequently Asked Questions

How should I address the judge?

Address the judge formally unless you are specifically invited by the judge to address them differently. Please see the guidance from the Judiciary: <https://www.judiciary.uk/guidance-and-resources/what-do-i-call-a-judge/>

What if I can't make my session?

Should a selected student be unable to attend their scheduled shadowing placement, they will be expected to notify CAJ as soon as possible so that this can be communicated to the relevant judge. If a student does not attend their shadowing placement without notice or without good reason, they may not be eligible to participate further in the scheme.

What if I can't afford to travel to the court/tribunal?

Students who cannot afford travel costs may be eligible for reimbursement. If you require assistance with travel costs, please speak to Ram Sabaratnam (ram.sabaratnam.19@ucl.ac.uk)

What if I do not have appropriate business attire?

Please get in touch with Ram Sabaratnam to have a confidential discussion. Support from the Faculty may be available to help you to purchase appropriate attire.

What if I require reasonable adjustments?

UCL is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion. We recognise that some students may require reasonable adjustments to participate fully in judge shadowing placements. Students who require reasonable adjustment should discuss these with the Ram Sabaratnam at the time of the application or as soon as possible thereafter. We will do our best to accommodate any reasonable adjustments in line with UCL's policies and statutory duties.

What if I have an issue during my shadowing scheme?

For any issues which arise during the course of your placement, please contact Ram Sabaratnam, the Projects Coordinator, at Ram.Sabaratnam.19@ucl.ac.uk