

News story: Honorary Queen's Counsel nominations: deadline 1 September 2017

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is inviting nominations for appointment as Queen's Counsel (QC) 'honoris causa' (honorary silk). Nomination forms must be completed and returned to MOJ by 1 September 2017.

The rank of QC is awarded to advocates (barristers and solicitors) who have demonstrated particular skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy. It has been awarded in various forms for around 400 years. The rank of QC honoris causa is separate to these awards and are awarded to lawyers and legal academics that have made a major contribution to the law of England and Wales outside practice in the courts, which has not been recognised through other forms of honours.

Honorary silks were first awarded in the late nineteenth century and it has been the practice for governments to recommend a small number of lawyers and legal academics for the honorary rank with each round of substantive QC appointments. Despite its name, honorary silk is not part of the honours system and is administered separately within MOJ.

Eligibility criteria

In making a nomination you should ensure that your nominee meets the required criteria set out below:

- the award is open only to qualified lawyers and to legal academics
- the individual should have made a 'major contribution to the law of England and Wales'
- 'Outside practice in the courts' will generally mean that the award is made for an achievement other than a person's normal practice as a lawyer or academic
- QC honoris causa is not a 'working rank'. It cannot be used in practice as a lawyer. Furthermore, honorary silk cannot be awarded as an alternative to the substantive QC rank for people who, for whatever reason, do not fit its eligibility criteria
- Honorary silk is awarded only in England and Wales. There is no exact equivalent in Scotland or Northern Ireland. However, this does not mean that achievements of a similar nature cannot be recognised in those jurisdictions. If you would like to nominate someone, whose work is in Scotland or Northern Ireland, for an honour you can contact the [Scottish](#)

[Government](#) or the [Honours Secretariat for Northern Ireland](#).

We recognise that those who are not lawyers or legal academics make equally valuable contributions to public life, and may have done so in similar fields as legally qualified individuals. If you feel a non-legally qualified individual ought to be recognised, you can instead [nominate them for an honour](#).

If someone is nominated for honorary silk who has been nominated for an honour this year or has already been honoured in the last year, it is very unlikely that we will be able to put their name forward.

How to make a nomination

We welcome nominations for honorary silk from anyone, no matter what your background. If you would like to suggest someone for appointment, please complete the [Honorary QC nomination form](#) (MS Word Document, 93.5KB) .

When completing the form please give as much detail as possible. The more we know about a nominee, the easier it is to assess whether they meet the honorary silk criteria. If we have only a limited amount of information about someone, it is unlikely that we will be able to recommend them for appointment. You can nominate as many people as you like, but please ensure that you keep their details separate.

You need to complete the nomination form and send it to us by 1 September 2017 preferably by email or alternatively post to:

Mr Martin Marston-Paterson
Ministry of Justice
Postal Point 3.16
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Email: martin.marston-paterson@justice.gov.uk

Please note, we will only accept nominations which are submitted on the nomination form attached to this webpage. Letters of support for a candidate will not be accepted or attached to a nomination. In cases where more than one person wishes to nominate a single candidate, each individual must send in a separate form for the nominee. This gives a fuller representation of the candidate's suitability for honorary silk.

Timing

Please ensure that your nominations reach us no later than 1 September 2017. Nominations made after this date cannot be accepted.

Contact us

If you would like additional information on honorary silk or how to make a nomination, please feel free to contact us by phone on 020 3334 0970, or by email: martin.marston-paterson@justice.gsi.gov.uk.