CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: KING'S COUNSEL 2026

Applications are invited for appointment as King's Counsel for the 2026 round. Applications must be submitted by 30 September 2026. Applications should be submitted electronically to the KC Selection Panel at kcapplications@judicial.ky. All applications must comply with the eligibility criteria and core competencies set out in this document.

Introduction

The policy for appointments as King's Counsel in the Overseas Territories was first established by Royal Instructions in the 1960s and later replaced by Guidelines issued by the Lord Chancellor. Those arrangements require applicants to have at least 15 years' call and permit the Chief Justice, on behalf of the Judiciary, to nominate suitable candidates, on the assumption that judicial officers would be sufficiently familiar with those best suited for appointment to the Inner Bar.

Given the significant growth of the Cayman Islands Bar and the increasing scale of legal practice, it can no longer be assumed that all judicial officers will have direct familiarity with all practitioners who may merit consideration for appointment. To address this, the Judiciary has adopted a more transparent, inclusive, and structured approach, supported by clearly defined eligibility criteria and core competencies that provide a consistent basis for evaluating applicants.

Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Panel, chaired by the Chief Justice and comprising senior members of the judiciary and the legal profession.

The criteria which are set out below draw, in part, on the principles underlying the appointment of King's Counsel in England and Wales, adapted for the Cayman Islands.

Applicants familiar with the English King's Counsel appointment process may find it helpful to review the guidance notes and application documents currently used in England. While these English materials provide background and context for best practices in those appointments, applications in the Cayman Islands will be evaluated exclusively in accordance with the eligibility criteria and core competencies set out in this document, without reference to the English process.

Eligibility

To be eligible, applicants must:

(1) Be admitted to the Cayman Islands Bar and hold a current practising certificate;

(2) Have demonstrated excellence in advocacy in cases of substance in the Grand Court and the Court of Appeal, arbitrations or other comparable fora;

(3) Demonstrate consistent excellence across each of the following core competencies:

A. Excellence in advocacy;

B. Professional integrity and independence;

C. Sound judgment and legal expertise; and

D. Contribution to the administration of justice and the profession; and

(4) Provide evidence of both written and oral advocacy in relation to developing and advancing a client's case, whether in litigation, arbitration or other dispute resolution processes.

For exceptionally well-qualified candidates, **applications by attorneys who do not practise before courts or arbitral tribunals may be considered, in which case paragraphs (2), 3(B), and (4) above (and the corresponding paragraphs below) will not apply.** Any such candidates must be able to demonstrate major and sustained contribution(s) to the development and/or the practice of the law of the Cayman Islands (such as dedicated research , law reform, legislative initiatives).

All applicants will be judged individually against a standard of excellence, supported by the evidence provided.

There are no age requirements for applications. However, applicants should bear in mind that it is likely they will require extensive experience in legal practice in order to have acquired the necessary skills, judgment and expertise for appointment.

Core Competencies

A. Excellence in Advocacy

Applicants must demonstrate a high standard of advocacy appropriate to appointment as King's Counsel. This includes:

- the ability to present complex legal and factual issues clearly, persuasively and efficiently;
- skill in both written and oral advocacy;
- strategic judgment in the conduct of cases, including the identification of issues that matter and the effective advancement of a client's case; and
- experience of cases of substance, complexity or significance.

Advocacy may be demonstrated through litigation, arbitration or other formal dispute resolution processes.

B. Professional integrity and independence

Applicants must demonstrate:

- the highest standards of ethical conduct and honesty;
- independence of mind and professional rigour;
- fairness and courtesy in dealings with the court, opponents, clients and others; and
- consistent compliance with professional obligations.

C. Sound Judgment and Legal Expertise

Applicants must show:

- a high level of legal knowledge and expertise in their field or fields of practice;
- the ability to exercise sound judgment, including under pressure;
- an understanding of the wider implications of legal arguments and outcomes; and

- reliability and responsibility in the handling of complex or significant matters.

D. Contribution to the Administration of Justice and the Profession

Applicants must demonstrate a contribution to the legal system in the Cayman Islands, which may include:

- mentoring and supporting junior practitioners;
- *pro bono* work or service to the community;
- teaching, training or legal education; and
- contribution to law reform or professional bodies.

Such contributions are relevant but not determinative.

The Selection Panel for the 2026 appointments will comprise the Chief Justice, another senior Judge, a retired Judge and two King's Counsel to be appointed by the Chief Justice. In considering an application, the Selection Panel may, where it considers it appropriate, seek confidential views from other judicial officers before whom the applicant has appeared.

The Chief Justice will be the final decision maker in respect of nominations.

2026 KC Selection Panel

May 2026