

FORMS OF ADDRESS

For the Legal Profession and other outside organisations

1. Sir Thomas Legg KCB QC wrote the following to his colleagues in the Lord Chancellor's Department:

“The Lord Chancellor’s Department is rightly expected to maintain the highest standards of official courtesy and precision. To place on an envelope a wrong or insufficient description of the person to whom it is addressed is a breach of good manners and a confession of ignorance or carelessness. We frequently correspond with Ministers, members of the judiciary of various degrees, and with peers and Members of Parliament. It is particularly necessary that there should be no slip in addressing such recipients.”

2. This statement applies to Lincoln’s Inn just as much as it does to the Lord Chancellor’s Department.

Within the Inn

3. Membership of the Inn can be divided into three basic categories:

(i)	Students	Student members are those who have not been called to the Bar, and can include undergraduates, graduates, former solicitors and other professionally qualified individuals.
(ii)	Members	This category comprises the following -
	Pupils	those who have been called to the Bar but have not yet gained full rights of audience
	Self-Employed Barristers	those in full time practice at the self-employed Bar
	Employed Barristers	those in full time practice at the employed Bar
	Non-Practising Barristers	those who are not actively using the qualification of barrister

	Judges and Queen's Bench Masters, panel chairmen etc	barristers who have been appointed to full time judicial office but have not necessarily been elected Benchers
(iii) Benchers¹	Royal	The Duke of Kent The Duke of York
	Treasurer	Elected, term of office one calendar year (from 11 January)
	Emeritus	Usually over the age of 70, non-voting Benchers*
	Ordinary	Voting Benchers, includes practising barristers and members of the judiciary
	Honorary	Senior figures of the legal profession from other jurisdictions, distinguished legal academics and other distinguished persons

* Emeritus benchers can now elect to remain Ordinary benchers on reaching 70.

Letters, Minutes of Meetings and Agendas, Memos

- Whilst the other Inns address their Benchers as “Master Smith”, at Lincoln’s Inn there is no distinguishing title for Benchers; they are to be written to using their conventional title.
- The table below is a guide for how to address members in correspondence:

Title	Salutation
Mr/Esq	Mr Smith
Miss	Miss Smith
Ms	Ms Smith
Mrs	Mrs Smith
Dr	Dr Smith
Professor	Professor Smith
His Honour Judge	Judge Smith
The Hon Mr Justice	Mr Justice Smith
The Hon Mrs Justice	Mrs Justice Smith
The Rt Hon Lord Justice	Lord Justice Smith
The Rt Hon Lady Justice	Lady Justice Smith

¹ Fully explained in Standing Orders of the Council of the Bench.

The Rt Hon Lord	Lord Smith
The Rt Hon Lady	Lady Smith
<i>Retired Judges</i>	
His Honour (retired Circuit Judge)	Judge Smith
Her Honour (retired Circuit Judge)	Judge Smith
Sir (retired High Court Judge)	Sir John
Dame Jane Smith DBE (retired High Court Judge)	Dame Jane

6. Members of committees, in Minutes, should be listed with their full title and then referred to as: Lord/Lady Justice Smith, Mr/Mrs Justice Smith, Judge Smith, Judge Smith QC, (Retired judges as His Honour John Smith, Her Honour Joan Smith), Mr/Mrs/Ms John/Joan Smith QC, Mr John/Joan Smith.

Judiciary

7. Judges of the Circuit or County Court should be addressed as:

“His/Her Honour Judge Smith”. If they are a QC this should still be included at the end of their title, e.g. “His/ Her Honour Judge Smith QC”. For Circuit Judges the first name is only used if there is more than one Circuit Judge with the same surname.

8. Tribunal Judges should be addressed as:

“Judge Smith”²

9. For Judges of the High Court and above the word Honourable may be shortened. Thus High Court Judges may be addressed as The Hon or The Honourable Mr/Mrs Justice Smith; Judges of the Court of Appeal may be addressed as The Rt Hon/The Right Honourable Lord/Lady Justice Smith. Justices of the Supreme Court (formerly Lords of Appeal in Ordinary or “Law Lords”) may be addressed as The Rt Hon/The Right Honourable The Lord Smith of Fleet – titles are only qualified with, for example, “of Fleet” if there is more than one peer with the same surname. QC is never added at the end of the name of a judge of the High Court or above. First names are included for Judges of the High Court and Court of Appeal only if there is more than one judge with the same surname.

² Mark Ockelton is the exception. Although a tribunal judge he is more senior and is not called Judge Ockelton.

10. On retirement a High Court Judge is addressed as Sir John Smith and a Judge of the Court of Appeal is addressed as The Rt Hon/The Right Honourable Sir John Smith. There is no change for Law Lords or Justices of the Supreme Court. Circuit Judges lose the term Judge in their address hence Her Honour Judge Smith becomes Her Honour Joan Smith but are still addressed as “Dear Judge...” in the salutation.

Silks

11. Addressing silks (QC) is different according to gender. John Smith would be John Smith Esq QC. Joan Smith would be Ms, Miss or Mrs Joan Smith QC (according to the individual barrister’s preference). If marital status is unknown it is best use the salutation Ms.

Useful Links

Courts and Tribunals Judiciary

<https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/you-and-the-judiciary/what-do-i-call-judge/>

Who’s Who

<http://www.ukwhoswho.com/>

Debrett’s

<http://www.debretts.com/forms-address/titles>

[http://www.debretts.com/forms-address/professions/legal³](http://www.debretts.com/forms-address/professions/legal)

Bar directory

<http://www.legalhub.co.uk/>

³ The Debrett’s guide is very helpful; however it does suggest that you use social titles. For Inn events, we should be using their conventional judicial address. The only exception is if someone is retired, e.g. Sir William Blackburne.