



Hammond Cup – In their words...



The Hammond Cup

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The Hammond Cup, is an advocacy competition and is literally the only one of its kind in the UK and has long been established in Nottinghamshire's Law Society's history, with the competition being held every year for the last 55 plus years.

There are two rounds, the first round asks applicants to present cases in civil or criminal sentencing exercises, then to the final round, where four finalists present at a mock trial, normally this is criminal.

In both rounds, the presentations are before a set of judges – in the final round, the judges are of the High Court. This year, the judges in the final round were HHJ Coe KC, HHJ Coupland and JP Massarella.

This year, the competition attracted a lot of entries and with the extra help of Advocacy training from Nottingham Law School, the four finalists were ready to take the stage and demonstrate their advocacy skills.

The finalists this year were, Katie Hall from MJC Law, Aleena Kazmi from Freeths LLP, Emily Millard and Zoe Aindow, both from the University of Law.

Emily, Zoe, Katie and Aleena, share their experiences of how important this competition is and why you should get involved...



Emily Millard Winner 2023

"I first heard about the Hammond Cup at the 'Cocktails and Competitions' evening hosted by the law society in Autumn 2022. A number of competitors from previous years attended, making it an invaluable opportunity to learn about what the Hammond Cup involved and the benefits of taking part.

The law society then put on two weeks of advocacy training to prepare us for the competition. We were able to watch an example mock trial and given excellent tips on preparing a case during the two sessions.

The competition is split over two rounds; a choice of either criminal or civil submissions in round 1, followed by a criminal mock trial for the second and final round. The final was well attended by spectators, and it was definitely nerve wracking standing up first to prosecute, but I quickly got into the role (helped by the stellar performances of our witnesses).

I have found the whole experience really enjoyable and would strongly recommend entering next year. Everyone involved genuinely wants you to succeed, making it such a supportive environment to practice and improve your advocacy skills. I received feedback from top practitioners and judges and my confidence has grown massively.

A huge thank you to everyone involved in organising the Hammond Cup – I am so grateful to have had this opportunity and have really enjoyed participating."



Zoe Aindow

Finalist 2023

The first time I heard about the Nottinghamshire Law Society competitions was at a cocktail event held by the NJLD in September 2022. The evening involved presentations about each of the competitions and I chatted past winners and participants. I came away wanting to enter the Hammond Cup because it sounded like a great opportunity to practice my advocacy skills.

However, when the deadline to enter the Hammond Cup came around in spring 2023, I found I was reluctant to enter because the competition was due to take place during the build up to my BPC exams and I wanted to focus on revision. A friend convinced me to enter anyway, and I'm so glad I did.

I chose the civil advocacy exercise for the first round of the competition. The detailed problem provided was great practice for analysing a case from all sides to find the best points to make in court. Making the application itself in a mock court room was daunting, but once I started speaking my nerves disappeared. The best thing about the first round was the personalised feedback which I found genuinely helpful and will inform my advocacy going forwards.

I was delighted to go through to the final where I was 'instructed' for the defence of a mock criminal trial. I cross-examined the prosecution witness and examined the defendant in chief before giving a closing speech. The trial took place before two Circuit Judges and a Justice of the Peace, which was quite intimidating!

However, they were actually very welcoming and provided further great feedback. The final was a thoroughly enjoyable and valuable evening, and I'd recommend entering to anyone who can.



Katie Hall

Finalist 2023

Taking part in the Hammond Cup offers an excellent opportunity to challenge yourself and to develop the skills of advocacy and trial preparation in a supportive environment.

I had heard of the Hammond Cup Competition previously and toyed with the idea of entering the competition as I enjoyed studying Criminal Law at University, but I never took the brave step to enter the competition. My decision to enter the Hammond Cup this year was solidified at the Cocktails and Competitions night hosted in October 2022. At the Cocktails and Competitions night there was a presentation on all the competitions available to enter (the Hammond Cup, Presidents Cup and the Kevin De Silva Legal Article Competitions), and I had the opportunity to speak to previous Hammond Cup finalists to gain some insight on their experiences. All finalists I spoke to had positive experiences and thoroughly valued the opportunity to develop their advocacy skills and to take part in a unique competition such as the Hammond Cup.

Following the inspiration to enter the Hammond Cup, all entrants were given the opportunity to attend two advocacy training sessions in preparation for the competition. These sessions were extremely helpful in providing advocacy tips and training and offered helpful reassurance.

Round 1 of the competition was to deliver a plea in mitigation in a Magistrates Court setting. Careful planning and structure to the plea in mitigation was required with the aim of being persuasive. I really enjoyed preparing for Round 1 including researching the relevant sentencing guidelines and working out what realistic sentence I would be asking the Magistrates to give my client.

The Final of the Hammond Cup Competition was to prepare for and advocate in a criminal trial, examining and cross-examining witnesses. This was a great opportunity for me to develop new skills including trial preparation, advocacy skills and listening skills, listening to the witnesses' responses and adapting my questioning to their responses. Although nerves once again came into play, I found the trial enjoyable. The Hammond Cup Final was overall a fun and rewarding experience and everyone, including my fellow competitors, were very friendly and welcoming, making me feel at ease.

I highly recommend the Hammond Cup Competition to others; it is a fun experience, it is an opportunity to step outside of your usual comfort zone and to develop key skills and confidence involved with advocacy. You will receive training sessions to support you in your preparation and you will also receive beneficial feedback from some of the best Barristers and Solicitors in Nottingham. The Hammond Cup has given me the confidence to tackle new challenges and in particular the enthusiasm to continue to develop my advocacy skills in my current legal role.



Aleena Kazmi

Finalist 2023

I was drawn to the Hammond Cup when I first heard about it at the 'Cocktails and Competitions' event last year. Despite being nervous about taking part, it became clear to me that this would be a brilliant opportunity to advance my Advocacy skills. After speaking to some past competitors at the event, I decided to take part in what proved to be a thoroughly valuable and enjoyable experience- one that I would highly recommend.

We were also invited to attend two training sessions before the competition commenced, these fully equipped us with the relevant knowledge- from oral presentation to witness examination and how to deal with the nerves that we will all inevitably experience! We were provided with invaluable feedback at each stage, and it was lovely to meet so many people and make great connections.

Speaking at the final was daunting yet exciting at the same time. A huge thank you to everyone who played a witness and made it a very entertaining trial! I am really glad I took part in this historic competition and once again would highly recommend it!