

THE MCCARTHY BURSARY

APPLICATION FORM

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS

- Please complete your application in full, attaching all required and supporting documentation, and return in the same email to:
UNDERTREASURER@KINGSINNS.IE
- Forms that are not signed with the relevant tick boxes completed will not be accepted by King's Inns.
- Note that signatures may be electronic signatures, but it is not sufficient to simply type a person's name in the relevant field. Learn how to create a digital signature here: kingsinns.ie/cmsfiles/apply-now/DIGITAL-SIGNATURE.pdf
- All applications must be received no later than 5 pm (Irish time) on 4th August 2026
- All queries must be directed to: UNDERTREASURER@KINGSINNS.IE
- Applicants are shortlisted and will be invited for an interview in person at King's Inns on 31 August 2026. Applicants are advised to keep that date available until further notice.

This application is used to assess students for the Bursary and is received in the utmost confidence. All personal data supplied on this application will be stored securely and processed only for the purpose of the application process and any related legal studies course. For further information please see the King's Inns Data Protection Statement at kingsinns.ie/dataprotection

NIALL AND BARBARA MCCARTHY BURSARY

Mr Justice Niall St John McCarthy (1925–92) and his wife Barbara McCarthy (nee Foley) died in a road traffic accident in 1992. Mr Justice McCarthy was educated at Clongowes Wood College and UCD, admitted to the degree of Barrister-at-Law at King's Inns in 1946, made Senior Counsel in 1959, Chairman Irish Bar Council 1980–82, and was a Judge of the Supreme Court from 1982 to 1992. In 2002, on the tenth anniversary of the death of their parents, their sons and daughters created the Niall and Barbara McCarthy Bursary, making a generous contribution with further support provided by McCarthy friends, members of the Judiciary, the Bar, and friends of King's Inns. At the time of the launch of the Bursary, the Irish Times recalled the description of Niall McCarthy in the newspaper's obituary as "a man whose concern for the oppressed constituted a golden thread through his rightly acclaimed judgments". His wife, Barbara, was equally rich in intellect and passion for life. The couple were a true team who enriched the lives of those around them, especially their children's." Mr Justice McCarthy's obituary in The Independent (UK) stated that "His legal conclusions were invariably concise and delivered with an articulate certainty, sometimes passionate force. His special distinction was in presenting the law not as cold abstracted logic, but an instrument with real human consequences."

Mr Justice McCarthy had a wide range of interests and served as the first Chairman of the National Archives Advisory Council and as President of the Medico-Legal Society of Ireland.

BURSARY AIM AND PURPOSE:

In setting up the Bursary in 2002, the McCarthy family intended to broaden the accessibility base and break down barriers to entry at the Bar in an initiative that can now be seen as a very early and vital means of promoting true diversity and inclusion. The aim of the McCarthy Bursary is to provide financial support to one student who might not otherwise be able to take the degree course and enter practice at the Bar [King's Inns and the McCarthy family have been committed to selecting a recipient that has experienced a challenge or disadvantage in their life and who would be able to use their insights and experiences in their practice as a barrister.](#) The King's Inns seeks the information in this form to enable the Board to select the person who best fulfils the criteria. Documentation and information provided will be retained for a maximum of one year following the date of the award of the Bursary to the successful candidate and will be used and/or stored solely for purposes related to the awarding of the Bursary.

THE MCCARTHY BURSARY CONSISTS OF:

- Full remission of fees to King's Inns course leading to the degree of Barrister-at-Law
- Maintenance grant dependant on individual need and on the funds available to the Bursary

- A six-week internship at the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (taken in the summer following the degree course)
- Grant to cover travel and maintenance costs in Strasbourg.

HOW TO APPLY AND KEY INFORMATION

1. Applicants are required to
 - a. complete a detailed application form
 - b. submit a reflective piece of 1250 words maximum
 - c. supply the names of two referees whom King's Inns may contact
2. Applicants are shortlisted and will be invited for interview in person at King's Inns. Interviews for shortlisted candidates are scheduled to take place on Monday 31st August 2026. Arrangements can be made, if necessary, for a remote interview on the same date. Please save this date.
3. Final decision regarding eligibility is determined by the McCarthy Bursary Panel, as is the appointment of the McCarthy Scholar.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – TO APPLY

In order to be eligible to be shortlisted for interview, applicants will have applied for and been deemed eligible to sit the entrance examination for the Barrister-at-Law degree course in 2026; alternatively, an applicant may have sat and passed the entrance examination in a previous year and deferred their commencement of the

Barrister-at-Law degree course to the year in which they are applying for the Bursary. The Bursary is only available to new students who are about to commence the Barrister-at-Law degree course in 2026 and is not available to continuing students who have already commenced the course (e.g. students who are entering year 2 of the modular course).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – TO BE AWARDED THE MCCARTHY BURSARY

Following interview, the top ranked eligible candidate will be notified that they are the chosen McCarthy Scholar for the academic year commencing 2026. This will be conditional upon the following conditions being met:

- The first placed applicant must pass the Entrance Examination to the Barrister-at-Law degree programme at the King's Inns in the year in which they apply for the McCarthy Bursary (or have passed the entrance examination in a previous year and deferred their commencement of the Barrister-at-Law degree course to the year in which they are applying for the Bursary) AND
- The successful applicant must take up the place on the Barrister-at-Law degree course in the year in which they apply for the McCarthy Bursary. The status of McCarthy Scholar may not be transferred to a later year.
- The successful applicant must be legally entitled to work and study in Ireland.
- The successful applicant has provided all documentary evidence required by the Board.

If the first placed applicant does not meet the above conditions, they will forfeit the Bursary and it may be awarded to a suitable runner up candidate.

* For information on the educational and eligibility requirements for admission onto the degree of Barrister at Law course, see kingsinns.ie/courses/degree-of-barrister-at-law

APPLICATION FOR THE MCCARTHY BURSARY

Please complete EACH of the following panels; if a panel does not apply to you then please write “not applicable” in that panel.

We treat your privacy seriously and when we collect and process your personal data, we will do so in accordance with the GDPR, the Data Protection Acts 1988–2018 and with our Data Protection Statement. You are responsible for informing King’s Inns of any subsequent changes to your personal data. For further information please see the King’s Inns Data Protection Statement at

kingsinns.ie/dataprotection

PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname:		First Name(s):	
Date of Birth (DD/MM/YY):			
Gender:			
Home Address:			
Eircode:			
Correspondence Address (if different):			
Eircode:			
Mobile Phone:			
Email:			

LEGAL EDUCATION

Please provide details of Law courses completed by you to date* (starting with most recent) Please also provide a copy of transcripts for each year of this course.				
Institution	Course Title	Year	Completion Date	Overall Grade

Did you receive Access funding as an undergraduate, or, if you attended the Diploma in Legal Studies, did you benefit from the Gaffney Scholarship or any other fee remission from King's Inns?			Yes*	No
If yes, please provide details:				

*If you received Access or other funding, please enclose a letter from the relevant institution confirming same.

Did you apply for or receive a SUSI or Local Authority funding as an undergraduate? Please type YES or NO													
If yes, please provide details:													
Have you availed of any other means tested funding towards your education, including school and third level education, in the past? Please type YES or NO													
If yes, please provide details:													
Secondary schools attended (starting with most recent)	<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="2">Dates of Attendance</th> </tr> <tr> <th>From</th> <th>To</th> </tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	Dates of Attendance		From	To								
Dates of Attendance													
From	To												

EMPLOYMENT

Are you currently employed?	Yes Part-Time Full-Time No										
Please provide details of your employment / self-employment history (starting with your most recent role); please also include details of any unpaid work experience / volunteer work which may be relevant to this application.											
Place of Work	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Role</th> <th>Dates</th> </tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	Role	Dates								
Role	Dates										

		From	To
Are you entitled to live and study in Ireland?		Yes	No

FAMILY DETAILS

Information about related parties should only be provided if this information is relevant to your application and you are in receipt of financial support or other benefit from them. All related parties must provide their consent separately on this form to have their personal data included on this application.

Family Member (e.g. Mother, father, guardian, child, sibling – please do not give the name of the family member)	Indicate (yes/no) whether you currently reside with this person	Highest level of education achieved to date (i.e. Primary Education, Group/Inter/Junior/Leaving Certificate, PLC, Adult Education, Certificate Diploma, Degree, Masters Programme etc.)	Current Occupation or current place of study

*Additional information can be added on an extra sheet attached to the application if required.

CURRENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Please type YES in the appropriate box:	
Home Owner	
Private Rented Accommodation	
Local Authority Tenant Purchase Scheme	
Local Authority Rented Housing	
Other non-permanent accommodation (please give details)	

Do you own additional residential or other property in which you do not reside? Please type YES or NO	
If yes, please provide details:	

FINANCIAL INFORMATION - SECTION A

Particulars of income from paid employment (including self-employment). If you are receiving support from your parent(s), including by residing with them, please give details of their income.* Where applicable please ensure that this section is completed by the relevant persons. There is a separate consent section at the end of this form that must be completed by each person referenced in this section.					
	Estimated total income for the year ended 31 December 2025				
	Self	Spouse/Partner (if applicable)	Parent 1 (if applicable)	Parent 2 (if applicable)	Documents Required (NB documents will only be required of the successful applicant – do not enclose them with the application)
Occupation (be as specific as possible)					N/A
Income from employment e.g. PAYE – salary, wages, fees etc.					Revenue documentation e.g. employee details summary
Income from pension (from former employer or pension scheme)					Notice of Assessments and Accounts
Income from self- employment					Revenue documentation
Income from land: profits from farming activities					Notice of Assessments and Accounts

Income from any other source. (Please specify)					Relevant evidence
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* If neither you/your spouse/partner/your parent(s) are in paid employment please go to **Section B**. **NB you need only provide information on spouse / partner and parents if you are living with them or are financially supported by them, or you are supporting them.** All related parties must provide their consent separately on this form to have their personal data included in this application.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION - SECTION B

Information about related parties should only be provided if this information is relevant to your application and you are in receipt of financial support or other benefit from them.

Particulars of income from Department of Social Protection (DSP) (Complete where applicable)					
	Estimated total income for the year ended 31 December 2025				
	Self	Spouse/Partner (if applicable)	Parent 1 (if applicable)	Parent 2 (if applicable)	Documents Required (NB documents will only be required of the successful applicant – do not enclose them with the application)
Current or most recent occupation (be as specific as possible)					N/A
DSP – Jobseekers Benefit (shortterm)					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement
DSP – Jobseekers Allowance					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement

DSP – Jobseekers Transitional payment (JST)					
DSP – Supplementary Welfare Allowance					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement
DSP – Pension Payment (please specify)					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement
DSP – Rent Supplement					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement
	Estimated total income for the year ended 31 December 2025				
	Self	Spouse/Partner (if applicable)	Parent 1 (if applicable)	Parent 2 (if applicable)	Documents Required
DSP – Mortgage Interest Supplement					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement
DSP – Illness Benefit					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement
DSP – Disability Allowance					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement
DSP – Partial Capacity Benefit					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement
Other DSP payment (please specify)					Revenue documentation and Social Welfare Statement

All related parties must provide their consent separately on this form to have their personal data included on this application.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you wish to provide any additional information on your circumstances please do so here (NB this is entirely optional): 200-300 max words.

REFLECTIVE PIECE

The late Mr Justice McCarthy was one of Ireland's leading jurists. His judgments reflect his commitment to justice, fairness, and the rule of law. The McCarthy Scholar is expected to share these values. It is expected that the McCarthy scholar will be an intelligent and highly motivated individual who is committed to a legal career at the Bar, and who would, without the Bursary, experience significant financial challenges in achieving that aim.

Please enclose a typed reflective piece (max. 1,250 words) with this application form, demonstrating your suitability to receive the bursary.

Please address the following question. You may add any additional information that you feel may assist the panel in reaching their decision.

- You have provided basic information regarding your financial situation. Are there any other financial factors that impede your ability to attend Kings Inns and practice at the Bar without the assistance of the Bursary?
- You have provided basic information about your educational background. Are there any other factors in your educational background that you would like the panel to consider? How has your education to date shaped your ambitions for legal practice?
- Provide example(s) of how you have demonstrated resilience in your personal and professional life to date and how these experiences will shape your legal practice.
- You may wish to provide information in respect of your own personal background and/or that of your family.

- What steps have you taken to date in preparation for a career at the Bar? What is your intended area of practice? Which of your skills, knowledge and experiences point to your likely success as a practising barrister?The McCarthy Scholar will go to the ECHR in Strasbourg for 6 weeks in the summer of 2027. What do you know of the Court's role, and if selected are you available for those weeks?

Reflective Piece

REFEREES

Please provide the details of two referees eg. a tutor / teacher from a course you have attended or supervisor from a place of work. You must have the permission of the referee before including their name in this application. You acknowledge that we may contact any referee included here directly.

Referee 1	
Name	
Job Title	
Relationship to you	
Address	
Telephone No.	
Email	
Referee 2	
Name	
Job Title	
Relationship to you	
Address	
Telephone No.	
Email	

CHECKLIST

Please ensure the following documentation is enclosed with your completed application form

- ☐ Letter from your former institution confirming that you received Access funding or financial support (if applicable)

Reflective Piece (max. 1250 words)

Transcripts of all law degree/diploma results

Completed consents by all related parties referenced on this form

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information provided is true and accurate. I acknowledge that, if I am the successful applicant, I will be requested to supply evidence, which will include Revenue / welfare or other appropriate documentation confirming the information provided to the Board.

Signature of applicant: _____

Date: _____

EXPLICIT CONSENT FOR PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA / SPECIAL CATEGORY PERSONAL DATA – APPLICANT

We require your explicit consent to obtain and process the personal data that you are providing on this form, particularly in relation to special categories of personal data relating to health, race, or ethnicity. King's Inns are committed to the protection of personal data that you provide, and we will only use it for the purposes of considering your application. For further information please see our Data Protection Statement available at kingsinns.ie/dataprotection

I consent to the processing of my personal data and special categories of personal data as set out in this form and provided to King's Inns, by King's Inns and by the McCarthy Bursary Panel. I understand that my results in the entrance examination will also be shared with the Panel by King's Inns, and I consent to that. I understand that information provided in connection with this application will be treated in the utmost confidence and will be used only for the purposes of deciding the McCarthy Scholar for 2026. Information supplied will be destroyed following the decision of the Panel, which will be final. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by contacting dataprivacy@kingsinns.ie.

Signature of applicant: _____

Date: _____

RELATED PARTY DECLARATION

This section should be completed by any Related Party included in this application

RELATED PARTY NO. 1

Explicit consent for processing Personal Data/Special Category Personal Data

We require your explicit consent to obtain and process the personal data provided on this form, particularly in relation to special categories of personal data relating to health. King's Inns are committed to the protection of the personal data that you provide, and we will only use it for the purposes of considering your application. For further information please see our Data Protection Statement that is available at kingsinns.ie/dataprotection

Consent

Please tick:

I consent to King's Inns processing the personal data and special categories of personal data submitted with this application. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by contacting: dataprivacy@kingsinns.ie

Name of related party: _____

Signature of related party: _____

Date: _____

RELATED PARTY NO. 2

Explicit consent for processing Personal Data/Special Category Personal Data

We require your explicit consent to obtain and process the personal data provided on this form, particularly in relation to special categories of personal data relating to health. King's Inns are committed to the protection of the personal data that you provide, and we will only use it for the purposes of considering your application. For further information please see our Data Protection Statement that is available at kingsinns.ie/dataprotection

Consent

Please tick:

I consent to King's Inns processing the personal data and special categories of personal data submitted with this application. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by contacting: dataprivacy@kingsinns.ie

Name of related party: _____

Signature of related party: _____

Date: _____

RELATED PARTY NO. 3

Explicit consent for processing Personal Data/Special Category Personal Data

We require your explicit consent to obtain and process the personal data provided on this form, particularly in relation to special categories of personal data relating to health. King's Inns are committed to the protection of the personal data that you provide, and we will only use it for the purposes of considering your application. For further information please see our Data Protection Statement that is available at kingsinns.ie/dataprotection

Consent

Please tick:

I consent to King's Inns processing the personal data and special categories of personal data submitted with this application. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time by contacting: dataprivacy@kingsinns.ie

Name of related party: _____

Signature of related party: _____

Date: _____

Forms that are not signed with the relevant tick boxes completed will not be accepted by King's Inns.

Note that signatures may be electronic signatures, but it is not sufficient to simply type a person's name in the relevant field.