

PILnet Public Interest Law Mentorship Program Sixth Round

Guide for Mentors and Mentees

About the Mentorship Program

PILnet is pleased to launch the sixth round of its Public Interest Law Mentorship Program (the “Program”) in Hong Kong. This round will begin in September 2026 and end in February 2027. The Program is made possible with the generous support of the WYNG Foundation.

Mentees will be law students or recent law graduates with an interest in social justice and public interest law. Student mentees should be those currently studying law, who are enrolled in LLB, JD, GDL, GDEHKL, or PCLL courses in Hong Kong. Recent law graduates, including those currently working as trainee solicitors, barristers or pupil barristers, should have completed their legal studies within the past two years.

Mentors will be experienced lawyers, based in Hong Kong, with a demonstrated interest in public interest law or pro bono legal work. Mentors may be barristers, solicitors at international or local law firms, in-house counsel, or lawyers working at local NGOs.

PILnet will attempt to match mentees to suitable mentors according to their preferences and perceived compatibility to the extent possible, but cannot guarantee this in every case.

Objectives of the Program

In addition to promoting mentees’ personal and professional development, the Program will aim to inspire and give mentees a broader perspective of their future careers, by demonstrating how public interest work can be a real part of their legal practice, and providing examples of alternative career paths with a focus on social justice or public interest law.

Mentees’ Responsibilities

1. Monthly meetings with mentors: Mentees are expected to meet with their mentors around once a month, for a total of at least four meetings over the duration of the Program. Since mentors are busy lawyers with full schedules, the onus is on mentees to take the initiative to reach out to their mentors and propose dates and times for each meeting. Mentees should come to each meeting prepared with ideas for discussion, and will gain the most from their mentorships if they have thought about their overall goal both for the Program and for each meeting with their mentors.

2. Program events: It is mandatory that mentees attend all four events arranged by PILnet during the Program, namely the Opening Event, Sharing Event, Legal Training Workshop, and Closing Event (as described in the Program timeline below). At the Opening and Closing Events, mentees will have the chance to practice their networking skills in a relaxed and supportive environment, and expand their professional networks by connecting with fellow mentees and mentors. The Sharing Event will feature insights from public interest lawyers on the key mindsets and soft skills needed to build a purposeful, impact-driven career. The Legal Training Workshop will, through interactive and hands-on activities, allow mentees to learn and practice skills that are crucial for becoming effective public interest or pro bono lawyers.
3. Mid-term check-ins: In addition to the Program events and meetings with mentors, there will be a mandatory “mid-term check-in” with each mentor-mentee pairing, which will be a brief call conducted by PILnet online. Mentees are responsible for scheduling this check-in, on behalf of their mentor and themselves, with PILnet.
4. Reflection paper: At the end of the Program, mentees are required to complete an evaluation survey, including a brief reflection paper on their experience of the Program, which will help PILnet in improving the Program.

Mentors’ Responsibilities

1. Monthly meetings with mentees: Mentors are similarly expected to meet with their mentees around once a month, for a total of at least four meetings over the duration of the Program. Mentors are asked to be responsive and carve out the necessary time to meet with their mentees. In addition to sharing about their own public interest law or pro bono work, PILnet encourages mentors to provide practical advice for young professionals embarking on a legal career. Mentors should take the lead and guide conversations with their mentees, ensuring that their meetings are as productive as possible. Mentors are welcome to host joint meetings with other mentor-mentee pairings, which can be a good opportunity to connect and share insights with fellow mentors.
2. Mid-term check-ins: Around the midway point of the Program, mentors will be expected to attend a “mid-term check-in” with PILnet and their mentee, which will be a brief call conducted online.
3. Program events: Mentors are encouraged to attend both the Opening and Closing Events. In particular, their presence is strongly recommended at the Opening Event to mark the program’s launch and meet the mentee cohort in person.

PILnet will arrange optional introductory calls with mentors prior to the launch of the Program, in order to clarify expectations, offer tips, and answer any questions.

Throughout the duration of the Program, PILnet will be available to provide support to mentors or mentees wherever needed. We understand that both mentors and mentees may have demanding schedules, but we urge all participants to dedicate the time needed to make this experience as rewarding as possible.

Program Timeline and Expected Commitment

Key Dates	Events	Role of Mentees & Mentors
19 August 2026, 12pm	Mentee application deadline	Prospective mentees must submit an online application by the deadline. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis starting from the end of July. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply early.
19 August - 3 September 2026	Mentee interviews	PILnet will contact shortlisted applicants to schedule a short interview.
4 September 2026	Mentees notified	PILnet will notify mentees on the success of their applications.
16 September 2026, evening	Opening Event	• This <i>in-person</i> event will mark the launch of the Program, and will be a great opportunity for all mentors and mentees to meet each other in person for the first time. • Mentees are expected to attend, and mentors are strongly encouraged to attend. • PILnet will introduce each mentee-mentor pairing by email after the event.

Key Dates	Events	Role of Mentees & Mentors
September 2026 - January 2027	Mentor-mentee meetings	• Monthly mentor-mentee meetings will allow mentees to learn more about a career in public interest law and/or incorporating pro bono work into their future careers. • Mentor-mentee pairings are expected to meet around once a month, for a total of at least four meetings during the Program.
15 October 2026, evening*	Sharing Event	• This <i>virtual</i> event will feature a keynote speaker on a public interest law topic, and will include an opportunity for participants to network and share their experiences. • Mentees are expected to attend, and mentors are strongly encouraged to attend.
November-December 2026	Mid-term check-in with PILnet	PILnet will arrange a short online meeting with each mentor-mentee pairing during this period, to conduct a mid-term check in and discuss what additional support PILnet can provide.
2 December 2026*	Legal Training Workshop	• This <i>in-person</i> workshop will, through interactive and hands-on activities, allow mentees to learn and practice skills that are crucial for becoming effective public interest or pro bono lawyers. • Mentees are expected to attend.

Key Dates	Events	Role of Mentees & Mentors
28 January 2027, evening*	Closing Event	• This event will mark the completion of the Program, and will be a great opportunity for participants to celebrate their contributions and share their takeaways from the Program. • Mentees are expected to attend, and mentors are strongly encouraged to attend.

**Dates are subject to change, any adjustments will be communicated with advance notice.*

Enquiries

For any questions, please contact PILnet by reaching out to hkprobono@pilnet.org.