



Catherine Dobson

Year of call: 2009

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“A genuine rising star – highly intelligent and extremely thorough, she is always willing to go the extra mile.” The Legal 500

“The level of technical detail that she can absorb, digest and quickly turn around advice on is phenomenal. Whatever the subject and whatever the issue, she just gets it instantly.” Chambers and Partners

Catherine Dobson has a broad practice which combines general public law, regulatory and environmental law.

She was called to the Bar in 2009 and since then has been instructed in some of the leading cases in these fields, including *Privacy International v Investigatory Powers Tribunal* (the leading Supreme Court decision on the constitutionality of ouster clauses), *R (Miller) v The Prime Minister* (challenging the prorogation of Parliament on behalf of the Shadow Attorney General, *Re Y* [2018] UKSC 46 (the landmark Supreme Court decision concerning withdrawal of life-sustaining medical treatment), and *R (London Borough of Hillingdon and others) v Secretary of State for Transport* (challenging the Government's decision to support a third runway at Heathrow Airport).

Catherine has been ranked as a leading junior for several years by Chambers & Partners. She is a member of the Attorney General's A Panel of Counsel and the Attorney General's Public International Law C Panel of Counsel.

In 2020 Catherine was named Environmental and Planning Law Junior of the Year in the Chambers UK Bar Awards.

Catherine is a Fellow of St Edmund's College, Cambridge, where she supervises constitutional law.

Areas of expertise

Public Law and Human Rights

Environmental Law

Public Inquiries

International Arbitration and Public International Law

Art and Cultural Property

Catherine has developed a niche expertise in historic environment matters and has acted for owners and interest groups on art and antiquities matters, in particular on issues relating to the removal of art from historic buildings. She acted (led by Richard Harwood KC) for the successful former owner in *Dill v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2020] UKSC 20, where the Supreme Court clarified the test for what can constitute a listed building. She has recently advised on the lawfulness of removal of a high value statue from a listed building. She has lectured on these topics at the Institute of Art and Law.

Catherine is the co-author (with Richard Harwood KC and David Sawtell) of *Contested Heritage – Removing Art from Land and Historic Buildings* (2022), a practitioner's guide to the regulatory and property law issues that arise when dealing with heritage assets.

Recommendations

- *"Catherine brings together academic qualities with a strong sense of the practical, making her the ideal public lawyer."* The Legal 500 2021 (Administrative and Public, Leading Juniors)
- *"Catherine is extremely industrious, able to filter and analyse a mass of information, and produce (often at very short notice, and under great pressure) first class pleadings and written arguments."* The Legal 500 2021 (Administrative and Public, Leading Juniors)
- *"A superb senior junior, she takes incredibly technical information and creates a clear, decisive understandable path and does it without any arrogance."* The Legal 500 2021 (Environment, Leading Juniors)
- *"She provides immensely helpful technical advice."* The Legal 500 2020 (Administrative and Public, Leading Juniors)
- *"A genuine rising star – highly intelligent and extremely thorough, she is always willing to go the extra mile."* The Legal 500 2020 (Environment, Leading Juniors)
- *"She is quick to grasp often very technical detail and to give well-crafted advice to tight deadlines." "Her advocacy was phenomenal."* Chambers and Partners 2022 (Environment, London Bar)
- *"Every time I've seen her I've been impressed."* Chambers and Partners 2022 (Administrative and Public Law, London Bar)
- *"The level of technical detail that she can absorb, digest and quickly turn around advice on is phenomenal. Whatever the subject and whatever the issue, she just gets it instantly."* Chambers and Partners 2020 (Environment, London Bar)
- *"Very quick to grasp often very scientific and technical details and to give well-crafted technical advice to tight deadlines."* Chambers and Partners 2020 (Environment, London Bar)
- *"Catherine is phenomenally clever – she has an impeccable grasp of the case law and legislative framework and is able to apply this to novel or unusual circumstances in a way which is clear and highly effective. Her written work is extremely clear and elegantly worded. She is always accessible and fantastic with clients."* The Legal 500 2021 (Court of Protection and Community Care, Leading Juniors)
- *"She is very meticulous and analytical, and has a robust approach. She puts a lot of effort into preparing cases."* Chambers and Partners 2020 (Court of Protection, London Bar)
- *"She is extremely bright but also caring and kind. She has the perfect balance and approach for vulnerable clients."* Chambers and Partners 2020 (Court of Protection, London Bar)

- *“Catherine Dobson is fantastic, very clever and very on the ball.”*
- *“She’s incredibly approachable and consistently good.”*
- *“Her skeleton arguments are excellently constructed and she has empathy and understanding for those in difficult circumstances.”*
- *“She’s wonderful with clients. She thinks beyond the legal ramifications and considers what the personal impact on the client is.”*

Memberships

- Administrative Law Bar Association
- Liberty
- UK Environmental Law Association
- British Institute of International and Comparative Law

Qualifications

Education

- 2002-2006: Jesus College, Cambridge University, MA Law (Double First Class)
- 2005-2006: Université de Poitiers, France, Diplôme universitaire d’études juridiques françaises
- 2007-2008: Lincoln College, Oxford University, BCL

Scholarships and Prizes

- 2008-2009: Princess Royal Scholarship, Inner Temple
- 2007-2008: Arts and Humanities Research Council Scholarship
- Exhibitioner and Scholar, Jesus College, Cambridge
- 2006: The Russell Vick Prize for Law, Jesus College, Cambridge
- 2003: The Glanville Williams Prize for Law, Jesus College, Cambridge
- 2003: Peter Glazebrook Mooting Prize, Jesus College, Cambridge
- 2003: Peter Glazebrook Mooting Prize, Jesus College, Cambridge

Additional Information

Appointments

- Fellow, St Edmund’s College, Cambridge (2009 – September 2021)
- Dean, St Edmund’s College, Cambridge (January 2019 – present)
- Bye-Fellow, Jesus College, Cambridge (2014 – 2015)
- Visiting lecturer, Paris Campus of Université Catholique de Lille (2014 –2015)
- Catherine was a judicial assistant to Lord Clarke at the UK Supreme Court from September 2010 to July 2011

Pro bono

Catherine undertakes a number of significant of pro bono cases each year and is very happy to consider pro bono instructions.

Languages

Catherine speaks fluent French having grown up in Brussels, studied law at the University of Poitiers and worked within a francophone team at the International Criminal Court.

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