

## Information Pack

### Fee-Paid Lay Panel Member

Thank you for your interest in working with the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC).

Lay panel members assess and make recommendations for the appointment of judicial office holders, many of which are life-long tenures. This is a socially significant role, contributing to the continued excellence and integrity of the judiciary of England and Wales. We are very keen to hear from eligible people who are interested in the unique type of public service that judicial selection entails.

We hope to attract curious and perceptive people to sit as Chairs and Independent lay members for a range of judicial selection exercises. If you have the skills and experience needed to scrutinise, investigate, and assess candidates for judicial appointment, we want to hear from you.

This document provides an overview of the role and guidance on the application process.

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## 1. The work of the JAC

The JAC is an independent non-departmental public body that selects and recommends candidates for judicial office in the courts and tribunals in England and Wales, and for other tribunals with a UK-wide jurisdiction.

The JAC has three key statutory obligations:

- to select candidates solely on merit
- to select only people of good character
- to have regard to the need to encourage diversity in the range of persons available for selection for appointments

To find out more about the JAC's work, please visit [our website](#).

**We are currently looking to increase our cadre of lay panel members who we can call upon.**

Efficient and effective selection panels are important to ensuring that the JAC makes the most meritorious recommendations to appoint new judges and non-legal members of tribunals.

This is a challenging role. Each year, we make over 1000 recommendations for judicial posts, with our panels interviewing nearly 3000 candidates. This level of recruitment is likely to persist in response to the ongoing need to reduce court backlogs.

*This position is particularly suited to an experienced assessor of diverse people, who has worked with senior professionals and is familiar with competency or skills-based assessment.*

*If you have the skillset and integrity needed to scrutinise, investigate and assess candidates for judicial appointment, we want to hear from you.*

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## 2. JAC lay panel members

We interview candidates as part of our selection exercises, and panel members represent us in this process. Panel members review applications, interview candidates at a selection day, and provide an assessment that helps Commissioners decide who to recommend for judicial appointment.

All selection panels contain a judicial member, and at least one lay panel member. Generally, JAC selection exercise panels are composed of:

- A lay panel chair.
- A judicial member.
- A lay independent member.

Panel members are expected to interview up to 3 candidates per sitting day. Sittings are arranged in **blocks of 1-2 weeks**, with time factored in for write ups and quality assurance.

In addition to involvement in sifting and interviews, panel members produce assessment reports. Reports must be of high quality and completed to tight deadlines, ensuring the relevant competencies are addressed, whilst accurately reflecting both the available evidence and the panels overall assessment.

Panels assess all the evidence of a candidate's merits against a competency framework (or Skills and Abilities criteria) for the post. Panels must challenge and probe the information before them in order to give the Commission well-informed advice.

Although our Commissioners make the final decision about who to recommend for appointment, they rely heavily on the panel assessments in making their decision. Panel members therefore have a key role in ensuring we conduct our business efficiently, fairly and with a focus on its statutory duty to select on merit.

### 3. Job description

If successful, you will be working as a Lay panel member (in either the panel chair or independent member role).

Both independent members and panel chairs are required to:

- independently assess candidates, at sift (when application forms and/or other material are reviewed) and selection day (when candidates are assessed using various tools including a competency or skills-based interview) following JAC processes, to arrive at a unanimous decision.
- write efficient and accurate evidence-based assessments on a digital system, that may be read by senior members of the judiciary and the Lord Chancellor.
- support the panel chair in their activities, especially in the drafting of panel reports, to help ensure the smooth and effective running of the panel.
- actively participate and attend all relevant selection events.
- work closely and constructively with JAC staff and other panel members.
- participate in discussions at key stages in the process.
- support other panel members in adhering to and actively promoting the JAC's policies and processes.
- consistently uphold the aims of the JAC.
- demonstrate the JAC values of Fairness, Professionalism, Clarity and Openness, Learning and Respect.
- be willing to give and receive feedback and use that for self-development and improvement.
- raise any concerns with the exercise manager.

- as needed, assist JAC staff in other selection-related tasks, such as advising on operational matters, policy-making, or conducting research

In addition, when acting as **panel chair**, panel members will:

- chair the sift and selection day assessments.
- lead panel meetings, inviting comments and opinions from the other panel members.
- initiate and lead panel discussions on fair selection techniques, including addressing unconscious bias, before selection begins.
- ensure that the panel works as a team, with all members contributing equally to the decision-making process, to arrive at a unanimous decision.
- ensure JAC's processes are followed to the required standard.
- lead on producing the panel reports.
- Participate in the moderation of candidates, working collaboratively with chairs of other panels.

## 4. Person specification

We are looking for experienced professionals who already possess the skills to perform successfully as a panel member. These are challenging and demanding roles, and some flexibility in working hours is required. You will work under time pressure, in an intellectually demanding environment, while ensuring fairness and consistency in assessment.

It is highly desirable that applicants have experience of using competency or skills-based selection processes.

The JAC uses a hybrid working approach, currently conducting business activity via a mixture of face to face and remote delivery formats. It is essential therefore that any successful applicant has the ability to work remotely in a safe and secure area and is able to comfortably use the relevant IT tools. IT tools used include Google Drive, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp, especially for selection day activity.

### Essential requirements

Applicants must have:

- experience of sitting on panels, boards, or committees to make collective decisions.
- skill in conducting interviews and assessments, using a structured process and asking probing questions to test the suitability of candidates.
- excellent written and oral communication skills.
- the ability to quickly analyse a large quantity of information, condensing it into balanced, clear, and concise evidence-based reports.
- strong digital skills.

- an understanding of and a commitment to diversity, including the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- an awareness and understanding of the diversity of the communities which the courts and tribunals serve.
- the ability to work constructively with others.
- Digital proficiency is a prerequisite for this role.

## 5. Information about the role

### **Remuneration**

For each full day of sitting, panel chairs are paid £310 and independent panel members £270 (incorporating holiday pay of £34.99 and £28.69 respectively). The JAC does not pay sick leave, nor is the role pensionable.

Income tax and National Insurance are deducted at source by the JAC. Your fees will be paid via BACS transfer, one week in arrears. There is no need for you to invoice the JAC.

Receipted (standard class) travel and subsistence costs will be reimbursed in line with the JAC's travel and subsistence policy.

### **Hybrid delivery approach**

We currently have a mixed approach in running selection exercises.

- Across all exercises, all assessment up to selection day will be conducted remotely.
- For salaried roles, we run selection days face to face.

Where remote delivery is used, panel members are expected to undertake their work at home, using available IT tools such as Google Drive; Google Forms and Microsoft Team for participating in selection days.

Where there is face to face selection day activity, this will usually take place in Central London, close to the JAC premises. Occasionally, other locations ie Newport, Manchester may be used.

### **Time commitment**

Applicants will need to have the flexibility to meet the demands of the JAC programme of selection exercises, committing to block sittings over the course of their tenure. This role would not suit a candidate who could only commit to 1 or 2 days a week.

An example of a typical block sitting for an independent member is set out at [Annex A](#).

## 6. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for these posts, you:

- should not hold, or have ever held, judicial office (this does not include magistrates, who are eligible to apply)
- should not be, or have ever been, a lawyer in any jurisdiction

### Nationality requirements

Open to UK, Commonwealth, EU and European Economic Area (EEA) and certain non-EEA nationals with the right to work in the UK.

### Age

There is no age limit for candidates.

### Diversity

JAC panel members perform a critical role in the recruitment of the judiciary of England and Wales. It is essential our panels are representative of wider society. The JAC is committed to the recruitment, retention and ongoing support of diverse panel members from all backgrounds, operating in line with the latest data on the [UK working- age population](#). This ensures diversity is at the forefront of selection panel member composition, both for lay panel members and judicial members.

We seek to foster a diverse and inclusive working environment. We welcome applications from all candidates who meet the eligibility criteria.

We particularly encourage applications from people with Black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds as these groups are currently under-represented on our panels.

**Yn ogystal, rydym hefyd yn croesawu ceisiadau gan yr ymgeiswyr hynny sy'n gallu siarad Cymraeg.** (*Additionally, we also welcome applications from those candidates who can speak Welsh.*)

All appointments will be based solely on merit.

## 7. Training and appraisal

Successful candidates will be required to attend a 1-day induction day with an experienced panel member. Initially you will sit as an independent panel member, supporting the panel chair.

Where possible we also aim to arrange shadowing opportunities to give new panel members a taste of a selection day.

Ongoing performance is appraised by the JAC. The appraisal process is open, so you will have the opportunity to see your report and reflect your views. Work is offered subject to a consistently high level of performance.

### **Conflict of interest**

You should notify the JAC in your application of any potential conflicts of interest, and these should cease before the date of your appointment. A clear example of a conflict would be offering advice or coaching services to candidates for judicial appointment.

## **8. Selection process**

The selection process will consist of 2 stages:

**1.** Submission of CV and suitability statement against the essential criteria for the role.

The suitability statement is your opportunity to tell us about the experience, skills and knowledge you have. You should provide examples and evidence linked to the essential criteria and the [competency framework](#), demonstrating why your skills and experience would enable you to perform effectively in the role.

Please provide details of 2 referees, who must know you in a professional context, and be able to provide comment on how you meet both the essential criteria and competencies. Referees will be contacted by email, but only if we decide to invite you for an interview. Email details should therefore also be included with your CV

Your suitability statement and CV will be considered by a panel consisting of an existing lay panel member and a JAC member of staff.

**2.** If you remain in the selection process you will be invited for an interview with a panel consisting of JAC staff and experienced panel members.

Interviews will be held remotely.

Feedback will be provided to all candidates who are not successful following the interview.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

The JAC is committed to considering any reasonable adjustments needed to ensure that you can participate in the selection process fairly. Please advise us of any arrangements and adjustments you may require. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Baseline personal security checks**

All successful applications will be subject to checks covering aspects such as nationality, right to work and criminal records checks (covering unspent convictions) before commencing work as a JAC panel member.

Failure to pass these security checks will mean that the offer will be withdrawn.

### **Timescales**

This is a rolling recruitment exercise.

## 9. Contact information

If you have questions about the role please do not hesitate to contact us at [panels@judicialappointments.gov.uk](mailto:panels@judicialappointments.gov.uk)

Applications with your CV and statement of suitability can also be sent by email to [panels@judicialappointments.gov.uk](mailto:panels@judicialappointments.gov.uk)



### **Example timeline for a large legal selection exercise**

The JAC uses blocks of sittings to assess high volumes of candidates. All new panel members begin as independent members, progressing into Chair roles as experience builds.

Here's an example of the time commitment expected for a typical selection exercise. The time commitment for an independent member, sitting in Block 1 only, is highlighted in purple. The total days needed are: **15 days**.

10 June - Dry Run Role Play - 2 Panel Chairs Required

31 July - Actors Training Day - 2 Panel Chairs Required

**07 September - Panel Briefing Event (Independent member – Block 1)**

**08 - 11 September - Block 1 Reading Days (Independent member – Block 1)**

28 September - 03 October - Block 2 Reading Days

21 - 22 October - Block 3 Reading Days

**14 - 25 September - Block 1 Selection Days – (Independent member – Block 1)**

28 September - 04 October - Block 1 Writing Days (Panel Chairs Only)

07 - 18 October - Block 2 Selection Days - Six Panels Required

21 - 25 October - Block 2 Writing Days (Panel Chairs Only)

28 October - 01 November - Block 3 Selection Days - Five Panels Required

04 - 06 November - Block 3 Writing Days (Panel Chairs Only)

w/c 18 November - Moderation - 1 day (Panel Chairs Only)

*This example is intended to give you an idea of the time commitment required for one of our largest exercises, with a high volume of candidates. We also run a range of smaller exercises, but the scale of the larger competitions mean we need to utilise the entire cadre flexibly to meet demand.*