

Background

The JAC is responsible for selecting candidates for judicial office on merit, through fair and open competition. It is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Justice. An outline of selection processes is provided on its website.

The JAC

The JAC was established by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 (CRA). It has responsibility for selecting candidates for judicial office in courts and tribunals in England and Wales, and for some tribunals with a UK-wide jurisdiction.

The Commission has 3 main statutory duties under the CRA:

- 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 appointment.

The JAC runs a selection exercise in response to a vacancy request from the Lord Chancellor setting out the number of posts, the jurisdiction and/or the circuit or region. Each year the JAC agrees with the MoJ, HM Courts & Tribunals Service and Judicial Office which selection exercises are to be programmed for the following financial year.

Data Sources & Caveats

Figures presented for the years 2011-12 to 2013-14 are taken from the JAC's Annual Report for the relevant year whilst figures for 2014-15 onwards are taken from the JAC's Official Statistics (now part of the combined Diversity of the Judiciary Report) and data from the JAC Programme Office.

Data presented in this evidence pack is presented on a slightly different basis to the Official Statistics, where the number of applications and recommendations within selection exercises is presented for diversity purposes. As a result, the number of applicants and selections within selection exercises may differ slightly. Most notably, when the same individual is recommended for two roles in the same exercise (e.g., an individual recommended as both a Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal and a Fee-paid Judge of the Employment Tribunal in Table C2(g)), this is counted as two selections here, but one in the Official Statistics.

Prior to 2015-16 selections for immediate appointment and for a list for possible future appointment (under s94 CRA) were not separated for reporting purposes.

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.

Where the percentage of outstanding and strong grades compared to selections is greater than 100%, there were more outstanding and strong candidates than there were candidates selected. This usually indicates that the number of vacancies available was less than the number of candidates assessed as outstanding or strong. In some competitions there were both more outstanding and strong candidates than the total number of selections, and also a shortfall in vacancies filled. This occurs when outstanding or strong candidates cannot be placed in one or more specific legal jurisdiction or geographical location. For example, see the row for 2014-15 in Table C2(a).

In Tables C2(a) to C2(g), where a row contains "-" for every entry, this indicates that there was no selection exercise for this role reporting in the given time period. Data on individual exercises is not held for years prior to 2012-13, hence these tables begin one year later than Table C1. From 2022 onwards, the JAC was asked to present times series recruitment data for 4 additional roles (Tables C2(d) to C2(g)). Figures for these roles are not held for years prior to 2014-15.

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 - C2(g) – Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal and Fee-paid Judge of the Employment Tribunals (England and Wales)

For information about the diversity characteristics of individuals applying to and being recommended in JAC exercises reporting in 2023-24, see the [Diversity of the Judiciary 2024 report](#) and associated data tables. For previous years’ diversity data, links to previous years’ statistics can be found on the JAC website: <https://judicialappointments.gov.uk/statistics-about-judicial-appointments/>.

*Where a selection exercise falling into the 2024-25 window is currently ongoing, this is indicated in the tables. Where an exercise falling into the 2024-25 window has already completed, as of 10 December 2024, data for this exercise is provided.

JAC Commentary on Trends

This enclosed evidence covers the reporting period 2011-12 to 2023-24, consistent with our previous evidence submissions. However, recognising that at time of producing this evidence we are midway through the reporting year 2024-25, with several key exercises for the year already having completed, we have included, where possible, data from the current year and provide up to date commentary below on trends observed.

- The number of vacancies the JAC was requested to fill decreased for exercises reporting in 2023-24, to 1,010 having been greater than 1,200 in the previous two years. This is due to a combination of factors, including smaller vacancy requests in some of the larger fee-paid exercises, and the fact one of the three large fee-paid exercises (Recorder) did not fall into this reporting window – this was also the case in 2020-21, which had similar overall figures. We expect the total vacancies for exercises reporting in 2024-25 to be a similar figure to 2023-24.
- Despite the smaller number of vacancies, the JAC processed a number of applications only slightly smaller than in the previous year. Therefore, the number of applicants per selection rose to 8.1, its highest since 2019-20 and second highest on record. However, it should be noted that this is largely driven by high applicant figures in a small number of fee-paid exercises - in particular Deputy District Judge and Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) which both had more than 15 applicants per selection. High Court Judge, Assistant Judge Advocate General and an exercise recruiting to both the Upper and First-tier Tribunals for the Tax Chambers were the only salaried exercises attracting more than 5 applicants per selection (excluding two very small/specialised tribunals exercises).
- There have been continued instances of shortfalls between numbers of candidates selected as being suitable for appointment and vacancy requests for some key salaried roles. In the 2023-24 reporting period, there was a shortfall in 8 of the 35 exercises, totalling 143 vacancies. These predominantly occurred in 4 exercises: District Judge (51), Judge of the Employment Tribunals (30), Judge of the First-tier Tribunals (23) and one fee-paid medical members exercise¹ (29). All other shortfalls were smaller than 5.
- As will be noted from table C2(c), there was a shortfall of a similar magnitude for District Judge in the 2024-25 exercise, maintaining a trend of shortfalls for this role going back to 2019-20. The most recent exercise attracted a higher number of applications than any previous iteration on record, but this did not result in a significant increase in the number of candidates assessed as suitable for appointment.
- Although there was no shortfall for Circuit Judge in 2023-24 (in fact, there were more selectable candidates than vacancies, so, given business need, the vacancy request was extended from 80 to 92 to accept all selectable candidates), the most recent exercise, reporting in 2024-25, had a shortfall of 10 against a smaller vacancy request. This can be highly dependent on which jurisdictions the vacancies fall in, with all of this shortfall falling in the Crime jurisdiction.
- As seen in Tables C2(e) and C2(f), the shortfalls mentioned above for salaried tribunals exercises (First-tier and Employment) are new trends of concern, where previously the JAC saw only very small shortfalls. For Judge of the Employment Tribunals, there was a significant decrease in number of applications since the previous exercise for that role. It should, however, be noted, that the requirement for candidates to have previous judicial experience, which is usually required for this role, was waived for the exercises that reported in 2018-19 and 2022-23.

¹ Fee-paid Medical Members of the First-tier Tribunal, Health, Education and Social Care Chamber (Mental Health)

- Overall, the number of candidates assessed as outstanding or strong at selection days remained high in 2023-24 (555), and the percentage (64%) of such candidates as a proportion of those recommended for appointment was in line with the trend observed in the last six years.
- However, this percentage is higher for fee-paid roles (for example, see Table C2(g)) than it is for salaried ones. Restricted to fee-paid roles, the percentage was 70%, while for salaried roles it was 52%. Three of the roles described above as having shortfalls in recent exercises (District Judge, Judge of the First-tier Tribunal and Judge of the Employment Tribunals) all had under 40% as many candidates assessed as outstanding or strong at selection day as a proportion of total selections made.

Table C1: Vacancies, applications, recommendations and gradings for all JAC exercises from 2011-12 to 2023-24, overall figures by year
Figures in this table have been compiled from previously published statistics, except for the number of vacancies and number of candidates assessed as A (outstanding) or B (strong) at selection day for the two most recent years (2022-23 and 2023-24).

Year	Vacancies	Number of exercises reported in-year	Applications	Selected for immediate appointments (s87)	Selected for future appointments (s94)	Total selections (s87 & s94)	Applicants per selection	Shortfall against vacancies	Number of A and B candidates at selection day	A & B candidates as a percentage of total selections
2011-12	No data	25	5,490	No data	No data	746	7.4	No data	No data	No data
2012-13	No data	36	4,637	No data	No data	597	7.8	No data	No data	No data
2013-14	No data	35	5,591	No data	No data	806	6.9	No data	699	87%
2014-15	312	30	2,056	No data	No data	312	6.6	0	258	83%
2015-16	359	22	2,588	301	39	340	7.6	19	331	97%
2016-17	297	26	2,199	286	4	290	7.6	7	300	103%
2017-18	909	28	5,125	690	59	749	6.8	160	598	80%
2018-19	1,083	23	4,917	1,017	14	1,031	4.8	52	587	57%
2019-20	1,143	35	8,148	964	15	979	8.3	164	678	69%
2020-21	961	35	3,574	848	21	869	4.1	92	564	65%
2021-22	1,383	31	9,052	1,244	0	1,244	7.3	139	736	59%
2022-23	1,233	36	7,366	1,094	0	1,094	6.7	139	696	64%
2023-24	1,010	35	6,964	862	5	867	8.1	143	555	64%

Notes: Prior to 2015-16 selections for immediate appointment and for a list for possible future appointment (under s94 CRA) were not separated for reporting purposes.

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.

Table C2(a): High Court Judge

Figures in this table have been compiled from previously published statistics, except for the number of candidates assessed as A (outstanding) or B (strong) at selection day for the three most recent years (2022-23 to 2024-25).

Year	Vacancies (s87 & s94)	Applications	Recommended for immediate appointments (s87)	Selected for future appointments (s94)	Total (s87 & s94)	Applicants per selection	Shortfall against vacancies	Number of A and B candidates at selection day	A & B candidates as a percentage of total selections
2012-13	14	81	14	0	14	5.8	0	24	171%
2013-14	10	73	10	0	10	7.3	0	16	160%
2014-15	11	73	10	0	10	7.3	1	15	150%
2015-16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2016-17	14	56	8	0	8	7.0	6	10	125%
2017-18	25	129	17	0	17	7.6	8	19	112%
2018-19	25	52	10	0	10	5.2	15	10	100%
2019-20	25	64	17	0	17	3.8	8	17	100%
2020-21	25	45	17	0	17	2.6	8	17	100%
2021-22	17	41	9	0	9	4.6	8	9	100%
2022-23	10	47	10	0	10	4.7	0	12	120%
2023-24	2	18	2	0	2	9.0	0	4	200%
2024-25 to date	5	24	5	0	5	4.8	0	5	100%

Notes:

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.

Table C2(b): Circuit Judge

Figures in this table have been compiled from previously published statistics, except for the number of candidates assessed as A (outstanding) or B (strong) at selection day for the two most recent years (2023-24 and 2024-25).

Year	Vacancies (s87 & s94)	Applications	Recommended for immediate appointments (s87)	Selected for future appointments (s94)	Total (s87 & s94)	Applicants per selection	Shortfall against vacancies	Number of A and B candidates at selection day	A & B candidates as a percentage of total selections
2012-13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2013-14	54	No data	No data	No data	54	No data	0	64	119%
2014-15	53	232	21	32	53	4.4	0	54	102%
2015-16	62	246	48	14	62	4.0	0	48	77%
2016-17	55	184	42	2	44	4.2	11	25	57%
2017-18	116.5	401	98	6	104	3.9	13	89	86%
2018-19	94	200	60	12	72	2.8	22	53	74%
2019-20	50	164	30	13	43	3.8	7	29	67%
2020-21	63	175	53	0	53	3.3	10	41	77%
2021-22	78	225	62	0	62	3.6	16	39	63%
2022-23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023-24	92	250	92	0	92	2.7	0	54	59%
2024-25 to date	52	216	42	0	42	5.1	10	28	67%

Notes:

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.

Table C2(c): District Judge

Figures in this table have been compiled from previously published SSRB evidence and statistics, except for the number of candidates assessed as A (outstanding) or B (strong) at selection day for the three most recent years (2022-23 to 2024-25).

Year	Vacancies (s87 & s94)	Applications	Recommended for immediate appointments (s87)	Selected for future appointments (s94)	Total (s87 & s94)	Applicants per selection	Shortfall against vacancies	Number of A and B candidates at selection day	A & B candidates as a percentage of total selections
2012-13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2013-14	54	322	No data	No data	54	6.0	0	45	83%
2014-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015-16	61	199	45	16	61	3.3	0	65	107%
2016-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017-18	100.5	271	70	26	96	2.8	5	53	55%
2018-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2019-20	110	190	47	0	47	4.0	63	27	57%
2020-21	75	141	24	0	24	5.9	51	10	42%
2021-22	106	249	57	0	57	4.4	49	22	39%
2022-23	100	247	67	0	67	3.7	33	27	40%
2023-24	100	237	49	0	49	4.8	51	19	39%
2024-25 to date	100	291	51	0	51	5.7	49	20	39%

Notes:

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.

Table C2(d): District Judge (Magistrates' Court)

Application and selection figures in this table have been compiled from previously published statistics, except for the number of candidates assessed as A (outstanding) or B (strong) at selection day for the most recent year (2022-23).

Year	Vacancies (s87 & s94)	Applications	Recommended for immediate appointments (s87)	Selected for future appointments (s94)	Total (s87 & s94)	Applicants per selection	Shortfall against vacancies	Number of A and B candidates at selection day	A & B candidates as a percentage of total selections
2014-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015-16	18	190	15	3	18	10.6	0	17	94%
2016-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017-18	17	127	12	5	17	7.5	0	12	71%
2018-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2019-20	25	93	17	0	17	5.5	8	9	53%
2020-21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2021-22	32	176	32	0	32	5.5	0	19	59%
2022-23	25	116	19	0	19	6.1	6	6	32%
2023-24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2024-25 to date	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

Notes:

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.

Table C2(e): Judge of the First-tier Tribunal

Application and selection figures in this table have been compiled from previously published statistics, except for the number of candidates assessed as A (outstanding) or B (strong) at selection day for the most recent year (2023-24).

Year	Vacancies (s87 & s94)	Applications	Recommended for immediate appointments (s87)	Selected for future appointments (s94)	Total (s87 & s94)	Applicants per selection	Shortfall against vacancies	Number of A and B candidates at selection day	A & B candidates as a percentage of total selections
2014-15	6	46	6	0	6	7.7	0	4	67%
2015-16	1	23	1	0	1	23.0	0	1	100%
2016-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017-18	65	956	45	19	64	14.9	1	42	66%
2018-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2019-20	112	767	112	0	112	6.8	0	57	51%
2020-21	70	332	50	20	70	4.7	0	35	50%
2021-22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2022-23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023-24	70	358	47	0	47	7.6	23	13	28%
2024-25 to date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes:

Prior to 2017-18, exercises for the First-tier Tribunal were chamber specific. From 2017-18 to 2022-23, exercises were purely generic, recruiting to all chambers. Whilst we continue to operate generic recruitment campaigns for the First-tier Tribunal, since 2022-23, we have also run specific recruitment for the Tax and Property chambers given the specialist nature of the roles, in addition to recruitment for the General Regulatory Chamber due to the chamber's small headcount and array of jurisdictions.

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.

Table C2(f): Judge of the Employment Tribunals (England and Wales)

Application and selection figures in this table have been compiled from previously published statistics, except for the number of candidates assessed as A (outstanding) or B (strong) at selection day for the two most recent years (2022-23 and 2023-24).

Year	Vacancies (s87 & s94)	Applications	Recommended for immediate appointments (s87)	Selected for future appointments (s94)	Total (s87 & s94)	Applicants per selection	Shortfall against vacancies	Number of A and B candidates at selection day	A & B candidates as a percentage of total selections
2014-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015-16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2016-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017-18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2018-19	59	420	59	0	59	7.1	0	23	39%
2019-20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2020-21	25	62	21	0	21	3.0	4	9	43%
2021-22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2022-23	50	138	35	0	35	3.9	15	16	46%
2023-24	50	75	20	0	20	3.8	30	5	25%
2024-25 to date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes:

Employment Tribunal fees introduced in 2013 caused cases to drop. Recruitment stagnated as fewer judges were needed until the abolition of fees in 2017.

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.

Table C2(g): Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal and Fee-paid Judge of the Employment Tribunals (England and Wales)

Application and selection figures in this table have been compiled from previously published statistics, except for the number of candidates assessed as A (outstanding) or B (strong) at selection day for the two most recent years (2022-23 and 2023-24).

Year	Vacancies (s87 & s94)	Applications	Recommended for immediate appointments (s87)	Selected for future appointments (s94)	Total (s87 & s94)	Applicants per selection	Shortfall against vacancies	Number of A and B candidates at selection day	A & B candidates as a percentage of total selections
2014-15	33	109	22	6	28	3.9	5	15	54%
2015-16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2016-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017-18	30	50	15	0	15	3.3	15	10	67%
2018-19	285	1,623	285	0	285	5.7	0	161	56%
2019-20	219	1,764	219	0	219	8.1	0	148	68%
2020-21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2021-22	374	2,623	374	0	374	7.0	0	229	61%
2022-23	217	1,346	217	0	217	6.2	0	173	80%
2023-24	229*	1,775	229*	0	229	7.8	0	177	77%
2024-25 to date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*The vacancy request for this exercise was extended towards conclusion of the exercise, leading to two further recommendations being made in June 2024. Since these were made after figures had already been finalised for the JAC's Annual Report and Official Statistics, they will be counted separately in 2024-25 figures instead.

Notes: Prior to 2018-19, exercises for the First-tier Tribunal were chamber specific, and recruitment to the Employment Tribunal ran in isolation. From 2018-19 onwards, exercises have been generic, recruiting to all chambers as well as to the Employment Tribunal.

The JAC assesses candidates at selection days as outstanding (A), strong (B), selectable (C) or not presently selectable (D). It is important to note that gradings are an internal assessment measure of a candidate's performance in a particular selection exercise and against the specific criteria for that role at that time. They do not indicate performance upon appointment. Caution should be exercised when comparing gradings awarded across a period of years.