

Post Selection Day Evaluation and Feedback Report
00289 Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal,
Immigration and Asylum Chamber
May 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an evaluation of the selection days for Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber, as well as capture general feedback on candidate performance. The report describes how selection days were undertaken by both panels and candidates; including what characterised stronger and weaker demonstrations of the competencies needed to fulfil the requirements of the role.

Competency Framework

The selection day was divided into two parts. The first part was a roleplay which was designed to assess the following competencies:

- Exercising Judgement
- Assimilating and Clarifying Information
- Working and Communicating with Others
- Managing Work Efficiently

The second part was a competency-based interview, which was designed to assess the following competencies:

- Exercising Judgement
- Possessing and Building Knowledge
- Assimilating and Clarifying Information
- Working and Communicating with Others
- Managing Work Efficiently

The assessment criteria were developed so that candidates could demonstrate the proficiency and capability transferable to the role from other contexts. The specific behavioural indicators under each competency were designed to reflect the aptitude and faculty that an effective Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber is expected to have. This enabled us to assess candidates in a fair and consistent way.

Performance of candidates

716 candidates applied for this exercise. Shortlisting involved an online qualifying test, which all candidates were invited to complete. This comprised two multiple choice tests: a situational judgement test and a critical analysis test. The 300 most meritorious candidates were then invited to complete a written online scenario test. Following the scenario test, 155 candidates were invited to selection day. The 67 most meritorious candidates were recommended for appointment by the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) to the Senior President of Tribunals. In making this decision the Commission took into account all relevant character checks, and all evidence provided by the candidates at selection day, as well as the candidates' independent assessments and self-assessments.

Selection day

Selection days were held remotely via Microsoft Teams between 5 May 2026 and 20 May 2026. Candidates who took part in remote interviews were provided with [technical support to get ready for their selection day](#) as detailed on our website.

Development of the roleplay

The roleplay was devised and drafted by a tribunal judge. In common with all the selection tools developed for this exercise, the roleplay was designed to simulate a court or tribunal environment with candidates taking on the role of judicial office holders.

The roleplay assessed how candidates deal with the situations they may face and decisions they would have to make, if appointed. Candidates were expected to demonstrate their ability to meet the competency framework and whether they could maintain their performance under challenge and pressure.

The materials developed for this exercise were reviewed internally by Operations, Policy, and Diversity and Engagement teams to quality and equality assure the material to ensure it was an effective tool to assess candidates. The teams also ensured that the materials did not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any potential candidates undertaking the selection days on the basis of their diversity characteristic or professional background.

Following this internal quality assurance, the material was then reviewed by the JAC Advisory Group. The Advisory Group is composed of members of the judiciary and representatives of the legal professions and chaired by a lay JAC Commissioner. It offers advice and guidance on the development of selection material, quality assures the material, and considers – and mitigates – any negative impacts on diverse groups.

The effectiveness of the roleplay was assessed by means of a mock assessment with a range of volunteers from relevant candidate groups. This provided an opportunity to trial the test material and make any necessary amendments.

Structure of roleplay

The roleplay was designed to assess how candidates deal with decisions they would be asked to make and situations they may encounter if appointed as a Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

The candidate was cast in the role of a Fee-paid Tribunal Judge in the fictional Animal Societies (UK) Appeals Tribunal. This fictional tribunal was inquisitorial but had its own rules, which were provided in advance. No legislation other than that provided was relevant.

Candidates had to conduct an appeal hearing, make any necessary interventions, give appropriate reasoned rulings and deliver a final reasoned judgment.

The script was designed to test a candidate's ability to appropriately deal with situations and the people appearing before them, as well as process information and make decisions.

Candidates were given information on the background of the roleplay and any relevant law prior to the selection day. This consisted of:

- An extract from the Society Show Rules
- An extract from the Rules of the Appeal Tribunal

At selection day, candidates were given the following material to familiarise themselves with:

- The scenario
- A statement from the Appellant
- A statement from the Respondent

Marking of roleplay

A checklist and marking guide were provided to the selection day panels to guide them in what to look for under each competency.

Assessment of candidates' responses to the roleplay

The evidence for each competency is assessed as either outstanding, strong, sufficient or insufficient. The panels then made a final overall assessment of candidates as either outstanding, strong, selectable or not presently selectable.

Outstanding evidence included:

- Consistently effective handling of all aspects of the exercise
- Identifying and exploring all significant issues, assimilating information quickly and accurately, applying the rules appropriately, and reaching well-reasoned decisions supported by evidence
- Interactions with the parties were fair, empathetic and authoritative, and the hearing was managed efficiently whilst maintaining control, focus and procedural fairness throughout

Strong evidence included:

- Effective handling of most aspects of the exercise
- The most significant issues being identified and explored appropriately, information generally interpreted and applied correctly, and decisions supported by clear reasoning
- The parties being managed fairly and professionally, and the hearing proceeding in an organised and effective manner, with only minor omissions or inconsistencies

Sufficient evidence included:

- Adequate handling of the main aspects of the exercise

- Identification and consideration of the main issues arising in the case, an adequate understanding of the information and relevant rules, and decisions on the principal matters in dispute
- Generally effective questioning, communication and hearing management, although some issues were not explored fully and parts of the reasoning lacked depth, clarity or detail

Insufficient evidence included:

- Limited evidence across one or more areas of the exercise, with significant gaps in the handling of key issues
- Important issues being missed, misunderstood or inadequately explored, reasoning was unclear or unsupported, and limited evidence of effective application of the rules
- The management of the hearing, communication with the parties or decision-making process giving rise to material concerns and limited confidence in the candidate's overall approach

Competency based interview

Each candidate also undertook a competency-based interview. Here the panel was seeking further evidence and examples from the candidate of the required competencies and in the context of the role of Fee-paid Judge of the First-tier Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber. The panel drew upon evidence provided in the candidate's self-assessment, independent assessments and career history to inform their questioning.

Exercising Judgement

Outstanding evidence included:

- Examples involving highly complex, novel or sensitive issues requiring careful balancing of competing factors
- Clear evidence of independent decision-making, integrity, fairness and sound judgement in challenging circumstances
- Well-structured explanations demonstrating how relevant law, policy, evidence and competing considerations were analysed before reaching a decision
- Examples showing the ability to make confident and sustainable decisions under pressure and to explain the reasoning behind them clearly

Strong evidence included:

- Clear examples of reasoned decision-making in legally or professionally challenging situations
- Evidence of balancing competing considerations, applying relevant law or guidance and reaching sound conclusions
- Examples which demonstrated integrity, independence of mind and fairness, even where decisions were unpopular or challenged
- Decision-making was generally well explained, although some examples lacked the complexity, innovation or depth required for an outstanding grade

Sufficient evidence included:

- Evidence of making appropriate decisions and exercising reasonable judgement in familiar or moderately complex situations
- Examples which demonstrated an ability to identify relevant issues, consider available information and reach a justified conclusion
- Some evidence of fairness, integrity and independent thinking, but examples often lacked complexity, challenge or detailed explanation of the reasoning process
- Decisions which were explained adequately, but the approach or outcomes were not always explored in depth

Insufficient evidence included:

- Examples that did not clearly demonstrate decision-making, judgement or personal responsibility for outcomes
- Limited evidence of balancing competing considerations or applying relevant law, policy or procedure
- Explanations which focused on background information rather than the decisions taken and the rationale behind them
- Examples which lacked complexity, detail or relevance to the competency being assessed

Possessing and Building Knowledge**Outstanding evidence included:**

- Evidence of acquiring, applying and sharing knowledge in highly complex, unfamiliar or developing areas of law or practice
- Examples which demonstrated intellectual curiosity, rapid learning and mastery of new subject matter
- Compelling evidence of using specialist knowledge to achieve significant outcomes and of disseminating learning to others
- Examples which showed both depth of existing expertise and the ability to develop knowledge quickly when required

Strong evidence included:

- Clear evidence of developing knowledge in unfamiliar areas and applying that knowledge effectively in practice
- Examples which demonstrated a proactive approach to professional development and learning
- Good evidence of sharing expertise, training others or contributing to the development of colleagues
- The knowledge demonstrated was relevant and well applied, although examples lacked the breadth, complexity or impact associated with an outstanding assessment

Sufficient evidence included:

- Evidence of maintaining professional knowledge and acquiring new knowledge when required
- Examples which demonstrated an ability to research, learn and apply information appropriately
- Some evidence of sharing knowledge or supporting others

- Examples which demonstrated competence but lacked depth, complexity, detail or significant impact

Insufficient evidence included:

- Limited evidence of acquiring, applying or sharing knowledge
- Examples which were vague, overly general or failed to demonstrate how knowledge had been developed or used
- Little evidence of professional development beyond routine activities
- Insufficient detail to demonstrate the required level of legal, professional or technical understanding

Assimilating and Clarifying Information

Outstanding evidence included:

- Evidence of an exceptional ability to absorb, analyse and evaluate large volumes of complex information from multiple sources
- Clear examples of identifying critical issues, inconsistencies, risks and relevant evidence quickly and accurately
- Evidence of sophisticated analytical processes leading to well-supported conclusions
- Examples which demonstrated a clear link between the information considered, the analysis undertaken and the outcomes achieved

Strong evidence included:

- Clear evidence of identifying, analysing and prioritising relevant information in complex situations
- Examples which demonstrated effective handling of conflicting evidence, large volumes of documentation or competing viewpoints
- Evidence of strong analytical skills, supported by logical reasoning and clear conclusions
- Some opportunities for deeper explanation of methods or analysis remained

Sufficient evidence included:

- Evidence of reviewing information, identifying key issues and reaching reasoned conclusions
- Examples which demonstrated an organised approach to handling information and evidence
- Some analysis of conflicting information or large volumes of material
- Whilst the competency was demonstrated, examples often focused more on process rather than analysis and lacked depth, complexity or detailed explanation

Insufficient evidence included:

- Examples which provided limited evidence of analysis, evaluation or decision-making based on information received
- Insufficient explanation of how information was assessed, prioritised or weighed
- Important details, conflicting evidence or key issues which were not explored adequately

- Examples which were overly descriptive, procedural or lacked a clear analytical framework

Working and Communicating with Others

Outstanding evidence included:

- Evidence of exceptional interpersonal and communication skills demonstrated across a range of complex and sensitive situations
- Evidence of adapting communication effectively to meet the needs of different individuals, including vulnerable or disadvantaged people
- Examples of building trust, managing conflict, maintaining authority and achieving positive outcomes through communication
- Communication which was clear, empathetic, inclusive and tailored appropriately to the audience throughout

Strong evidence included:

- Evidence of effective communication and relationship management in challenging situations
- Evidence of adapting communication style appropriately and dealing with difficult conversations sensitively and professionally
- Strong examples of maintaining authority, influencing others, building understanding and promoting constructive outcomes
- Communication which was generally clear and effective, despite examples lacking the sophistication, breadth or impact required for an outstanding assessment

Sufficient evidence included:

- Evidence of communicating clearly and professionally with others
- Examples which demonstrated an awareness of different needs and an ability to work constructively with colleagues, clients or stakeholders
- Some evidence of adapting communication or dealing with challenge was provided
- Examples which were often straightforward, lacked complexity or provided limited insight into the strategies used

Insufficient evidence included:

- Examples which did not adequately address the question or demonstrate the required communication skills
- Limited evidence of adapting communication, maintaining authority, managing challenge or promoting understanding
- Responses which were vague, overly descriptive or focused on context rather than the candidate's actions
- Significant gaps in demonstrating effective communication or interpersonal effectiveness

Managing Work Efficiently

Outstanding evidence included:

- Examples demonstrating exceptional organisation, prioritisation and resilience in highly demanding or complex situations

- Clear evidence of improving systems, processes or ways of working to achieve substantial benefits
- Effective use of resources, technology and planning to manage competing demands and deliver successful outcomes
- Examples which showed significant personal responsibility, initiative and impact

Strong evidence included:

- Evidence of managing competing priorities effectively and delivering results under pressure
- Examples of introducing improvements, using technology effectively or organising work efficiently
- Evidence of resilience, adaptability and sound use of available resources
- Examples which were well developed, but lacked the scale, innovation or impact associated with an outstanding assessment

Sufficient evidence included:

- Evidence of organising workloads, prioritising tasks and meeting deadlines
- Examples which demonstrated resilience and a practical approach to managing work
- Some evidence of use of technology, planning tools or process improvements
- Whilst effective overall, the examples were often routine, lacked complexity or provided limited detail about the approach taken

Insufficient evidence included:

- Limited evidence of effective prioritisation, organisation or management of competing demands
- Examples which lacked detail regarding personal actions, planning, resilience or efficiency
- Responses which did not clearly demonstrate improvements, effective resource management or successful delivery under pressure

Suggestions from the panel for future success

- Ensure examples directly answer the question being asked and address the competency being assessed
- Avoid relying on pre-prepared or recycled examples that were developed for another competition or role
- Focus on your personal actions, decision-making, reasoning and outcomes, and avoid spending excessive time on background information or lengthy explanations before addressing the question
- In the role play, balance time management with effective questioning, analysis and decision-making, ensuring sufficient time is available to deliver clear and reasoned conclusions
- Support decisions and conclusions with clear reasoning and evidence

Welsh Questions

Candidates for posts in Wales were required to have an understanding of the administration of justice in Wales, including legislation applicable to Wales and

Welsh devolution arrangements. This requirement was assessed via an online video assessment through a series of questions. Candidates were assessed as either suitable or not suitable for posts in Wales, based on their answers to these questions.

Feedback from Candidates

After the selection days, candidates were invited to complete an anonymous candidate survey. A total of 44 candidates (28%) responded to the survey. The results of the candidate survey are below (please note that due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%):

The instructions provided beforehand enabled me to prepare for the selection day.

- 95% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 2% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 2% of candidates disagreed

I understood what was expected on the selection day.

- 95% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 5% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed

The situation discussed in the role play was realistic and relevant to the role.

- 82% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 11% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 7% of candidates disagreed

The role play gave me a chance to display how I would react to various situations.

- 73% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 20% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 7% of candidates disagreed

I am confident in the role play as a JAC selection tool.

- 80% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 18% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 2% of candidates disagreed

The interview questions gave me the opportunity to demonstrate my skills and abilities for this role.

- 64% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 18% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 18% of candidates disagreed

The panel behaved professionally and treated me with respect.

- 93% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 5% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed

- 2% of candidates disagreed

I am confident in the interview as a JAC selection tool.

- 64% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 27% of candidates neither agreed nor disagreed
- 9% of candidates disagreed