



Judging Your Future

Welcome to the first e-newsletter from the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC)!

From 3 April 2006, the JAC has had responsibility for the selection of candidates to judicial office. We have also taken over responsibility for this newsletter from the Department of Constitutional Affairs.

As you will have seen the first change we've made is the name. So welcome to Judging Your Future.

We have sought to take into account your comments for the content of the newsletter. Its format and style will evolve with the JAC. We continue to welcome further comments and suggestions, so please email us at our new email address: judgingyourfuture@jac.gsi.gov.uk. We would appreciate if you could amend your address books accordingly.

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So what is the JAC?

The JAC came into existence on 3 April 2006. We are an independent non-departmental public body (NDPB), established by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, with the purpose of selecting judicial office holders.

The JAC is a selecting rather than appointing commission. Our Commissioners will select one candidate for each selection exercise to recommend for appointment by the Lord Chancellor.

The JAC will select solely on merit, indeed, merit is the bedrock of the JAC and, in order to make sure we select the best people for the job, we want to encourage a wide range of eligible people to apply for judicial office.

To this effect, we have set ourselves three initial tasks:

1. To define merit, that is, what makes a good judge;
2. To determine effective and fair methods for assessing merit; and
3. To determine how best to encourage a wide range of applicants.

For more information about us, visit our website at - www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/about/aboutus.htm

Who are the Commissioners?

The JAC has 15 Commissioners who are drawn from the judiciary, the legal professions, tribunals, the magistracy and the general public.

Twelve Commissioners, including the Chairman were appointed through open competition with three selected by the Judges' Council. To find out more about the Commissioners visit our website at www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/about/chair_commissioners.htm

Transitional arrangements

We are operating in a transitional period during which we are reviewing the selection processes of judicial appointments.

During the course of this period, candidates for judicial office will be selected according to the existing Department of Constitutional Affairs procedures, but within the terms of the Constitutional Reform Act. To find out more about the transitional arrangements visit our website at www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/about/transitional.htm

The first selection exercises that we expect to operate under new JAC procedures will commence in autumn 2006. More information about the new procedures that are currently being developed will be covered in future issues of the newsletter.

Judicial selection exercises

Our aim is to provide you with information about current and future selection exercises as speedily as possible. All details about selection exercises will be placed on our website at - www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/competitions/current_comps.htm. We advise that you look at this page regularly for information.

Two selection exercises have just launched and two more will commence in the next two weeks. All the information you will require will be available on our website on launch date. Brief details of these initial selection exercises can be found below.

District Judge

Launch date – 27 June 2006

Closing date – 27 July 2006

Location – across England and Wales

www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/competitions/192.htm

Chairman - Agricultural Land Tribunal (Part Time)

Launch date – 27 June 2006

Closing date – 19 July 2006

Location – two vacancies - Northern Area and Wales

www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/competitions/198.htm

Appointed Person – Trade Marks

Launch date – 4 July 2006

Closing date – 27 July 2006

Location – primarily London with some travel

www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/competitions/208.htm

Specialist Mercantile Senior Circuit Judge

Launch date – 11 July 2006

Closing date – 7 August 2006

Location – Northern circuit

Forthcoming selection exercises

We appreciate that applying for any position is a process that takes considerable time, thought and effort and that you want as much of a forward look as possible.

We have therefore produced a timetable providing an overview of likely selection exercises coming up. You can view the schedule on our website at - www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/competitions/current_comps.htm. We must stress that this timetable is provisional and may be subject to change.

Outreach opportunities

In order to encourage a wide range of candidates to apply for judicial appointment, we will be organising and attending events throughout England and Wales aimed at those thinking about a judicial career. These outreach events will provide potential candidates with the opportunity to hear about judicial office and the judicial appointments process. Watch our website at www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/info_events/info_events.htm for upcoming events.

Judicial work shadowing

The judicial work shadowing scheme gives solicitors and barristers, who are thinking of applying for judicial office, an insight into judicial office and receive CPD hours at the same time! You can spend up to three days observing the work, in and out of court, of:

- A Circuit Judge;
- A District Judge (sitting in Civil or Family jurisdictions);
- A District Judge (Magistrates' Court); or
- A Tribunal member.

The JAC does not organise the scheme, it is the responsibility of the Judicial Office of England and Wales. More information can be found on their website at: www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications_media/general/work_shadowing.htm

Myth of the month

The JAC is committed to dispelling myths about the world of judicial appointments. We are currently constructing a page on our website devoted to such myths and we will continue to publish them in every issue of this newsletter. Our first example is:

Myth - You have to be an advocate to apply for judicial appointment.

Fact - Advocacy experience is not essential to apply for judicial appointment. You have to demonstrate the qualities required for the post in question. Advocacy experience is one way of demonstrating some of these qualities, but by no means the only way.

Any questions?

We are keen to hear from you and to answer any questions you have about the JAC or the judicial appointments process. Please send them in and we will be delighted to answer them!

All questions or comments should be sent to us by email to our new email address: judgingyourfuture@jac.qsi.gov.uk