

Competency Framework

Circuit Judge – Crime, Civil, Family



About the competency framework

The competency framework lists ways that a judge who is working effectively as a Circuit Judge might demonstrate each of the five competency areas relevant to this post.

This framework is aligned to the Judicial Skills and Abilities framework used by Courts and Tribunals Judiciary and Judicial College to ensure that role holders are assessed by the same measures at every stage of their career.

When considering your application and taking part in the selection process please think how your experience is transferable to the competencies of a Circuit Judge listed below. Please ensure you present examples in the specific competency area you are addressing. You do not need to address every bullet point in your example, but you should seek to demonstrate the competency area as a whole.

Although the same level of ability is expected across all three jurisdictions of the Circuit Bench, and the bullet points within the competency framework apply to all, there are certain aspects which require a particular focus across the three jurisdictions. For example:

- Facilitating communication amongst litigants and effectively communicating complex principles of law and procedure in civil and family jurisdictions;
- A capacity for demonstrating empathy and combining decisiveness with sensitivity as is frequently needed in the family jurisdiction;
- Crafting and delivering accurate and succinct summings up to the jury in the criminal jurisdiction.

Exercising Judgement

Demonstrates integrity and applies independence of mind to make incisive, fair and legally sound decisions

- Reaches decisions confidently at every stage of a case, which are soundly reasoned, and after full consideration of the implications
- Communicates decisions and the reasons behind them clearly and in an appropriate manner
- Applies the relevant law and procedure correctly to progress the case
- Demonstrates independence of mind
- Ensures fairness; demonstrates integrity and acts without bias or prejudice, especially in challenging, complex situations

Possessing and Building Knowledge

Possesses a detailed knowledge of own field(s) of law and practice. Demonstrates an ability and willingness to learn and develop professionally

- Demonstrates broad knowledge of the law and procedure in own field(s) of practice
- Demonstrates a capacity to acquire knowledge rapidly, especially of complex subject matter
- Keeps abreast of changes in law, new court processes and procedures, as well as wider society
- Pursues continuous learning and professional development, sharing relevant information and developments with others when appropriate

Assimilating and Clarifying Information

Quickly assimilates information to identify essential issues, develops a clear understanding and clarifies uncertainty where necessary

- Effectively assimilates and processes large amounts of complex information from multiple sources
- Identifies, and ensures the focus remains on, the relevant issues
- Weighs material fairly in order to reach a reasoned decision, and recognises where further information is required
- Keeps an open mind and does not reach premature conclusions

Working and Communicating with Others

(‘Others’ includes judges and those involved in the administration of justice, as well as all court users)
Values diversity and shows sensitivity to the different needs of individuals. Demonstrates good communication skills and builds rapport effectively

- Works well in a team, is supportive of other colleagues and receptive to their contributions
- Establishes authority and demonstrates courtesy, inspiring respect and gaining the confidence of others
- Listens attentively to ensure a fair opportunity to all parties to present their case whilst ensuring the efficient disposal of the proceedings
- Shows an awareness of the importance of diversity and sensitivity to the needs of different communities and groups
- Provides direction using appropriate strategies to maintain control and defuse tension when needed
- Communicates effectively both orally and in writing in a manner that ensures understanding by others

Managing Work Efficiently

Works and plans effectively to make the best use of available resources

- Manages time and prioritises tasks to ensure efficient completion of workload
- Demonstrates resilience, responding calmly and flexibly to changing circumstances and high pressure situations
- Resolves problems independently, but seeks advice and offers assistance to others when appropriate
- Embraces and makes full use of the latest technology to carry out the role in the most efficient way