

Introducing



The Judicial Profile

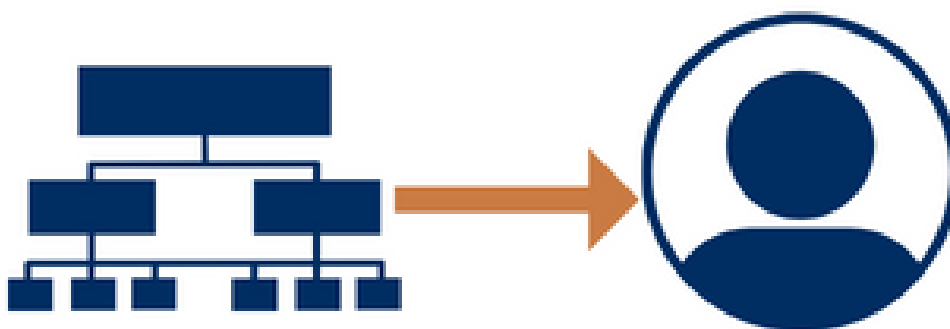
The Person Specification

Introduction

This guide has been designed to assist applicants in understanding The Judicial Profile and The Person Specification used by the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) to assess and select applicants for judicial office in Northern Ireland.

The Judicial Profile provides those who assess applicants for judicial office with a framework of the skills, attributes, behaviours and aspects of effectiveness needed to serve in judicial office.

Each Selection Committee will determine the appropriate Criteria and Elements required for the office under recruitment from the Judicial Profile. The resulting **Person Specification** defines what the Selection Committee will be assessing and will inform applicants what they need to demonstrate through the assessment and selection process. This enables NIJAC's Selection Committees to compare applicants against the Person Specification and to determine merit fairly and consistently.



The Judicial Profile

The Person Specification



The Judicial Profile

The Judicial Profile is an overall framework which provides a picture of what is required of those to be appointed to judicial office. It is divided between two areas: Skills & Attributes and Behaviours & Effectiveness. Within each there are three Criteria:

Skills & Attributes

- Knowledge and Expertise
- Intellectual Capacity
- Exercising Judgement

Behaviours & Effectiveness

- Collaborating Effectively
- Communication Effectively
- Managing Effectively

Under each of these headings are Competence Statements and Core Judicial Attributes. The table below shows a more detailed picture of The Judicial Profile framework:

	SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES <i>What judicial office holders should do well and their typical characteristic features.</i>			BEHAVIOURS & EFFECTIVENESS <i>How judicial office holders should act and how successful they are at achieving desired outcomes.</i>		
Criteria	Knowledge and Expertise	Intellectual Capacity	Exercising Judgement	(‘Leading and’) Collaborating Effectively	Communicating Effectively	Managing Effectively
Competence Statement	Has a level of expertise which is founded upon breadth and depth of knowledge and has the ability to transfer that expertise and knowledge to other areas.	Quickly assimilates information, develops a clear understanding and clarifies uncertainty through eliciting and exploring information.	Demonstrates integrity and applies appropriate independence of mind to make incisive, fair and sound decisions.	(‘Leads and’) Contributes to proceedings appropriately, respects difference and shows empathy and sensitivity in building relationships.	Communicates effectively with a broad range of people across multiple platforms.	Works effectively and plans to make the best use of resources available.
Core Judicial Attributes	Has achieved expertise. Has breadth and depth of knowledge. Can transfer their skills into other areas.	Is able to absorb and analyse information. Is respected, confident and maintains authority. Maintains and improves knowledge.	Believes in justice and fairness Is principled, impartial and independent. Makes good and effective decisions.	Works well with others in all environments. Recognises and respects difference. Deals effectively with others.	Listens patiently and courteously to others. Explains their decisions succinctly and timeously. Asks effective questions.	(<i>Thinks strategically and leads effectively</i>) Disposes of business effectively. Is competent, diligent, resilient and calm.



The Person Specification

The Person Specification is created for each role by the Selection Committee. Each Selection Committee will examine the Judicial Profile to determine the criteria to be used and against which merit will be determined.

As well as the Judicial Profile there will be two other significant contributors to that process:

- Job Description
- Co- Opted Member - Input of the Presiding officer at the relevant tier (or a colleague nominated by them)

The range of Criteria and Elements selected will take place under the guidance of NIJAC. The resulting Person Specification will set out for the Selection Committee and applicants the requirements for the role:

	SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES <i>What judicial office holders should do well and their typical characteristic features.</i>			BEHAVIOURS & EFFECTIVENESS <i>How judicial office holders should act and how successful they are at achieving desired outcomes.</i>		
Criteria	Knowledge and Expertise	Intellectual Capacity	Exercising Judgement	(‘Leading and’) Collaborating Effectively	Communicating Effectively	Managing Effectively
Judicial Office	List of elements applying <u>For example:</u> <i>Has achieved legal expertise.</i>	List of elements applying <u>For example:</u> <i>Quickly absorbs and analyses information and extracts the relevant facts.</i>	List of elements applying <u>For example:</u> <i>Demonstrates integrity, objectivity and appropriate independence of mind.</i>	List of elements applying <u>For example:</u> <i>Recognises and respects the diversity of communities and understands different needs.</i>	List of elements applying <u>For example:</u> <i>Expresses and succinctly explains complex matters.</i>	List of elements applying <u>For example:</u> <i>Remains calm and resilient even when under pressure.</i>

Many requirements will be shared across judicial offices but no two Person Specifications may be the same. Applicants for more than one judicial office will need to exercise wisdom when using a previous self-assessment when applying for different judicial offices.

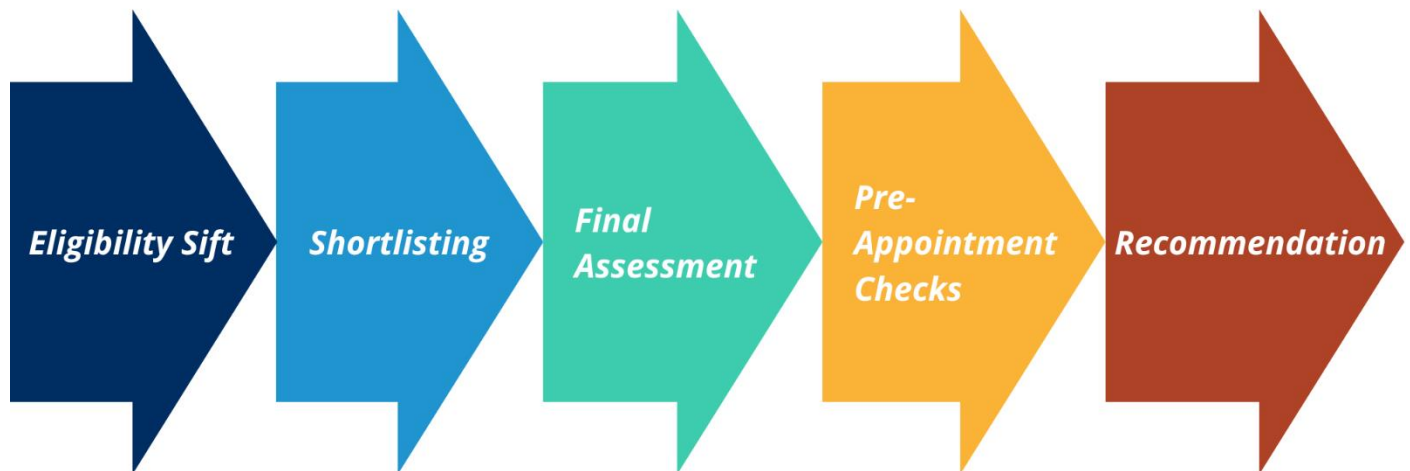
The respective Applicant Information Booklet for each scheme will state the Person Specification. In addition, the Booklet will also indicate at which stages of the scheme it will be assessed.

NIJAC also provides a series of documents called ‘[Guidance for Applicants](#)’. These documents give guidance on the selection process and each of the most regular assessment methods employed by NIJAC. All applicants for judicial office are encouraged to read the version relevant to their scheme.

The Assessment & Selection Process

The Assessment & Selection Process is designed to enable NIJAC's Selection Committees to select individuals for judicial office on the basis of merit, having considered their eligibility, suitability and integrity against the Person Specification.

Once an applicant has submitted their application the process of assessment and selection usually has five distinct phases, those being:



The most important step any applicant can make before entering this process is to fully understand the judicial office they are applying for. NIJAC provides a number of opportunities to learn about the role through a Job Description and Nature of the Role document. NIJAC also provides applicants with an opportunity to speak with a sitting judicial office holder through a confidential Point of Contact, whenever possible.

In addition, eligible people can apply to the [Judicial Shadowing Scheme](#) which provides an opportunity to shadow a judicial office holder for a day to gain greater insight into the role.

Take time to prepare before applying by reading all the supporting scheme documentation and utilising the opportunities above.

Assessment Methods

NIJAC will employ a number of methods throughout the Assessment & Selection Process which are designed to assess the relevant elements of the Person Specification in a particular way.



Approaches will include **reactive** type assessments where the Selection Committee determine the skills, attributes, behaviour and effectiveness of applicants on the basis of their historical actions. This approach can be seen in seeking self-assessment or in response to competency based questions at interview (e.g. “Tell us about a time when...”).



Also, **Proactive** type assessments which place applicants in the context of the role applied for (e.g. Situational Judgement Exercises, Role-Plays and In-Tray Exercises) and require applicants to demonstrate the required skills, attributes, behaviours and effectiveness in responding to given scenarios relevant to the office applied for.

Following on are descriptions and examples of the different assessment methods that can be used during The Assessment & Selection Process.



Application Forms

The Application Form is provided by NIJAC to give applicants the opportunity to share personal details including qualifications, employment history, other experience and to provide a Self-Assessment against the requirements of the Person Specification.

Bearing in mind the advice above about understanding the role applied for, what applicants say about themselves in their application form is vital. Forms will be looked at 'blind' by the Selection Committee i.e. they will not be given the Personal Details section which would reveal the identity or career history of an applicant. As such, assessment will be based solely upon the Self-Assessment at a critical stage of the process, shortlisting. Therefore, what an applicant shares in their application form has a pivotal impact on the prospects of their application.

It is important to provide evidence which addresses the requirements of the Person Specification as laid out in the Applicant Information Booklet. Only evidence provided in the context of a specific example (or number of examples) will be taken into consideration by the Selection Committee i.e. merely stating their title and lists of cases is insufficient, applicants need to state what they did to contribute to the outcome. Evidence should be carefully described as some of the Selection Committee may have no direct experience of the context of an applicant's work and therefore acronyms and assumptions as to understanding should be avoided. Evidence should be limited to facts about the scenario faced, actions taken and how that shaped the outcome. Applicants should avoid expressing opinion as to possession of the skill, attribute, behaviour or effectiveness in the example.

- ★ **S - Situation**
- ★ **T - Task**
- ★ **A - Action**
- ★ **R - Result**

Advice is provided by NIJAC in relation to techniques for maximising the impact of written submissions, in particular the use of the STAR tool. The STAR tool is a means of setting out examples in a manner which enables Selection Committees to readily understand the example, the challenge faced by the applicant and for detailing the actions the applicant took which led to the outcome.

Use of STAR is not an aspect of scoring but its absence may be commented on by Selection Committees in their feedback as a point of advice to help improve future applications.

The word limits used by NIJAC impose a constraint upon applicants which enhances the need to communicate in a clear and succinct manner. The STAR tool is an effective way of doing that.

A useful exercise is getting someone else (partner, friend or colleague) to read the proposed application before submitting it. This can be an effective way of stepping back and viewing the form objectively. Great care should also be taken to ensure accuracy in spelling and grammar as that can impact on the ability of the Selection Committee to interpret the evidence provided, and may have a direct bearing upon their perception of how effectively someone communicates when assessing that criteria.



Test

NIJAC will typically use a test as an interim or final shortlisting mechanism in high volume Schemes, however may use this method at other times. Tests for legal schemes will be set in the context of the role applied for i.e. applicants will be asked to respond to the types of decisions required in the actual role. Typically, these tests will be multiple choice but essay type response tests (or a mixture of the two) may also occur. Tests are designed and validated by those with expertise and knowledge of the role applied for.

NIJAC provides copies of a range of previous tests on its website and this resource should be used by any applicant to a scheme where a test may be used. Applicants are encouraged to read the tests and consider how they would have responded. Tests are typically delivered remotely using an online platform.

View previous [Test examples](#).



Interview

The Selection Committee will form the interview panel and will normally consist of 3 members including a Lay Commissioner and a Co-opted Member. Interview questions will focus on the assessment of some or all of the areas set out in the Person Specification.

Examples provided in the Self-Assessment section of the application form may be questioned at interview so it is important to be prepared to expand on the information provided. Interview questions may also examine how you may deal with specific challenges should you be appointed. Some questions may examine one or more areas of the Person Specification.

Gathering knowledge of the role and how it is developing both procedurally and legally may help identify some topics which would be useful to read into, or consider in advance of the interview as these topics may come up. It is also possible that the Selection Committee may want to explore some of the examples presented in the application form. Reviewing the application form and being prepared to speak in depth about any chosen example is important as is understanding the nature of the role applied for, and being able to speak to the demands of that role.

The interview may cover all or a narrow range of the skills, attributes, behaviours and aspects of effectiveness the Person Specification states are required for the role.



Situational Judgement Exercise

The typical objective of setting a Situational Judgement Exercise (SJE) is to assess information analysis and decision making skills. It may also assess knowledge, for example, ability to apply the law. This assessment method can require either verbal responses at interview or a written response in advance of the interview. Either way, it is an examination of an applicant's ability to analyse information, understand the factors affecting the decision, and make a decision.

Preparation can be aided by the example exercises on the NIJAC Website and by seeking out decisions made by the relevant court/tribunal or higher courts/tribunals. These can give an insight into the matters at hand and the potential problems posed by the SJE. As with other aspects of the role mentioned above, thorough research as to the nature of the role and the work it encounters is the best preparation.

View [Situational Judgement Exercise Examples](#).



Role-Play

A role-play may be used when recruiting for salaried judiciary. Role-plays enable the Selection Committee to observe the applicant dealing with the issues faced within the role. It is difficult to replicate the environment in preparation however applicants can take the opportunity (where possible) to observe the actual court/tribunal in action and prepare them for the eventualities which may occur.

The role-play provides applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate how they could perform in the role. Applicants undertake the role of the judicial office holder and actors will undertake other roles in the scenario. The Selection Committee will be present in the room and may opt to undertake a de-brief with the applicant at the conclusion of the role-play.

It is important to remember that the role-play actors will be displaying behaviours to require the applicant to demonstrate the appropriate skills, attributes, behaviours and aspects of effectiveness so the Selection Committee can assess the full range of the Person Specification.

Watch an [Example of a Role-Play](#).



In-Tray

In-Tray exercises aim to replicate the procedural aspects of the role and awareness of the nature of the role is an important aspect in preparation.

In-Tray exercises typically arise in roles where the office holder is faced with multiple decisions on differing matters in short periods of time e.g. District Judge (MC) or roles where volumes of different pieces of work need managed e.g. Tribunal Presidents. They reflect the nature of the role and the challenges frequently dealt with.

It can be a useful exercise for applicants to consider how to deal with a list of matters arising in within their own roles. Reflecting on this can be the best type of preparation in this instance.



Presentation

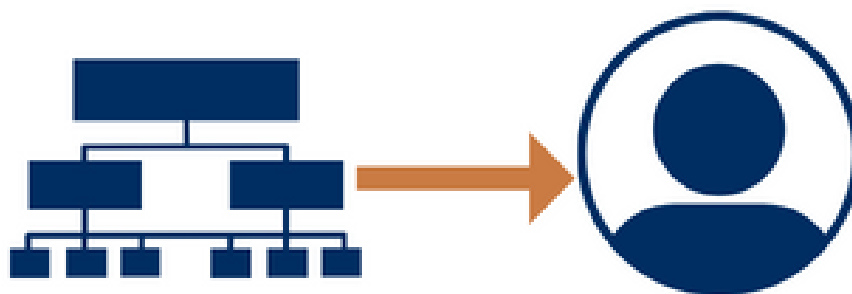
Presentations are typically used in schemes where the office holder has a leadership or training role. It may also be used in schemes where a high level of specific knowledge or experience is required, or where there are general developments in the law or other factors affecting the court/tribunal.

In advance of the interview an applicant will be given a topic to present on, and time to prepare; or they may be advised of the topic some days in advance and asked to present at interview.

Taking time to consider the court/tribunal environment (and the developing law within its jurisdiction or law which may have a bearing upon it) and thinking through how they may deal with the problems arising, is the best preparation an applicant can make.

Summary

The Judicial Profile is used by the Selection Committee (in conjunction with the Job Description and the expertise of sitting members) to determine the Person Specification which is used to identify the most meritorious applicant(s).



The Judicial Profile

The Person Specification

The Judicial Profile has two overarching areas: Skills & Attributes and Behaviours & Effectiveness. There are three criteria under each of the overarching areas: Knowledge & Experience, Intellectual Capacity and Exercising Judgement (under Skills & Attributes) and Collaborating Effectively, Communicating Effectively and Managing Effectively (under Behaviours & Effectiveness)

	SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES			BEHAVIOURS & EFFECTIVENESS		
	<i>What judicial office holders should do well and their typical characteristic features.</i>			<i>How judicial office holders should act and how successful they are at achieving desired outcomes.</i>		
Criteria	Knowledge and Expertise	Intellectual Capacity	Exercising Judgement	(‘Leading and’) Collaborating Effectively	Communicating Effectively	Managing Effectively

The Person Specification will indicate which criteria (and the elements applying under each criteria) which will be used to determine merit for appointment. This will be stated in the Applicant Information Booklet for each role. NIJAC will also provide Guidance for Applicants for each scheme.

Applicants will enter **The Assessment and Selection Process** where various methods will be used to assess applicants against the Person Specification including: papersifting, tests, interviews, situational judgment exercises, role-plays, in-trays, and presentations.

Please remember applying for judicial office is a competitive process and not everyone will succeed on every occasion. Prepare well, read the Applicant Information Booklet, supporting scheme documentation and use every opportunity for feedback.

**For further information on
The Judicial Profile | The Person Specification
and how it affects assessment and selection for
Judicial Office in Northern Ireland please visit the
NIJAC website at www.nijac.gov.uk**