



# Judge

Judges hear evidence in criminal and civil courts, make rulings and pass sentences based on the information presented during cases.

## What does the job involve?

- listening to the evidence and intervening at points during the proceedings
- consulting with other legal professionals such as solicitors and advocates, in court and behind the scenes
- mediating between the two sides, deciding whether to allow opposing sides to challenge each other's evidence
- dismissing a case if there is not enough evidence, or declaring a mistrial, or ordering a retrial on legal grounds
- keeping order in court, challenging unsuitable or noisy behaviour and in extreme cases, imposing formal sanctions (such as an order for contempt of court)
- instructing and advising a jury on the evidence
- using your knowledge of the law to decide the outcome of the case. In a criminal case this can relate to making judgements and handing out suitable sentences. In a civil case it can relate to asserting blame, and then deciding the level of suitable damages. In a divorce case it can relate to division of property and custody of and access to children
- if relevant, referring the case to a higher court.

## Routes and choices while at school:

You will need to try to get at least five or more GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A\* to C), or equivalent qualifications. These should include English, Science and maths. Other relevant subjects include Law, criminology and psychology.



## Skills You'll need:

- legal knowledge including court procedures and government regulations
- active listening skills
- the ability to think clearly using logic and reasoning
- knowledge of English language
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- excellent verbal communication skills
- the ability to use your judgement and make decisions
- leadership skills
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently



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## How to get into this role:

You can get into this job through an official appointment.

### Volunteering

You can get valuable experience and insights into the work of a judge through the [Judicial Work Shadowing Scheme](#). This may help if you later apply for selection to become a judge.

You normally have to be a qualified legal professional, with at least 7 years' experience in law-related work to join.

If you have been on the Judicial Work Shadowing Scheme, you can apply for a place on the [Judicial Mentoring Scheme](#). This scheme is open to applications from people who are currently under-represented in the judiciary. For example:

- women
- ethnic minorities
- lawyers with a state school education

### Other Routes

Judges are appointed by the [Judicial Appointments Commission](#). You'll need to apply to them to be considered for selection.

To apply, you must:

- be a qualified solicitor, barrister or chartered legal executive
- have worked as a legal professional for between 5 and 7 years, depending on the type of judge you want to be
- meet nationality requirements

Common starting roles include district, recorder and tribunal judges. For certain other judicial roles, you can apply if you're an experienced legal academic, or trademark or patent attorney

### Further information

You can find out more about how to become a judge from:

- [Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#)

### Career tips

If you're appointed as a full-time judge; you cannot return to legal practice.

Part-time judges, usually found in the lower courts, for example a tribunal or district judge, are paid a fee for each court session and are expected to sit for at least 15 sessions a year. Fee-paid judges can continue to practise law, providing there is no conflict of interest.



## Career path and progression

There are structured career development routes in the judiciary, which allow you to move from fee-paid sessional roles in the lower courts through to paid positions in the upper courts.

For example, with experience, you might move from deputy district judge or recorder to become a permanent district judge, circuit judge or high court judge. Beyond that, you could be appointed to the court of appeal.

You can also specialise in particular divisions of the judiciary, like the family courts or employment tribunals.

## Rates of Pay

Judicial pay ranges from around £90,000 to £270,000 per year, depending on their seniority. Some judicial roles are part time and may be combined with earnings (and higher earnings) from private practice.