

Qualifying Tests

What are qualifying tests?

Qualifying tests are a fair, transparent way to short-list candidates for the interview stage of most selection exercises below Senior Circuit Judge that the JAC runs.

When will tests be used?

The Judicial Appointments Commission uses qualifying tests as a short-listing method for most selection exercises below Senior Circuit Judge. The exercises for Employment Tribunal Chairmen and Judges of the Social Entitlement Chamber of the First Tier Tribunals will use tests, and they have been used already for exercises including Deputy District Judge (Magistrates) and District Judge, which ILEX Fellows are eligible to apply for.

What will the test paper be like?

Each test is different, tailored to the nature of the posts being advertised. It will be designed to be fair to all eligible candidates, regardless of their specialism or legal background.

When posts are advertised, the information pack will say whether there is to be a qualifying test, and will give details about the nature of the test for that exercise. It will say if special preparation is needed.

As a guide to what to expect, there are examples on the website of tests used in previous exercises.

- Deputy District Judges (Magistrates' Court) Selection Exercise 2008
http://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/docs/00367_qt.pdf
- Fee Paid Judge of the First Tier Tax Tribunal Selection Exercise 2008
http://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/docs/00385_qtsp.doc

Candidates are being tested on the qualities and abilities required for judicial office, such as their ability quickly to absorb and analyse information, their independence of mind and sound judgement, and their ability succinctly and clearly to explain procedure and decisions reached.

Short-listing is a competitive process, so the test is designed to be challenging, with time pressure.

Where will the test be?

Most tests are held in London, but for some of the larger exercises they may be held at venues around the country.

It will be under examination conditions with up to 25 applicants sitting the test together in each session.

You will be given the choice of completing the test on a JAC computer or on paper.

Unfortunately we are unable to reimburse any expenses incurred attending the test.

Who sets the papers?

The tests are devised for the JAC by serving judges, and piloted before being used.

Who marks the papers?

The answers are marked by a group of judges and moderated to ensure consistency in the marking.

Where does the test fit into the rest of the selection process?

The test is primarily a short-listing tool to determine which candidates should be invited to a selection day where there will be an interview and may be role-play exercises. The qualifying test score is generally made available to the panel at the selection day because it provides evidence of qualities and abilities.

Why use tests?

Tests provide reliable evidence of candidates' abilities, irrespective of their specialism or visibility within the legal profession.