

JA Job Advert

Judicial assistants (JAs) in the High Court of England and Wales are assigned to judges of the High Court across the three Divisions. They assist the judges(s) to whom they are allocated, for example by carrying out research, summarising documents and providing general support for the judge(s) in the organisation of their work and hearings. The application process is for placements lasting between three and five months during the 2021 – 2022 legal year. **Interviews will be held during the week beginning 12th July 2021.**

Aimed at recently qualified barristers and solicitors who are in the early stages of their legal career, applications will be invited from those who have graduated with an excellent degree and will be able to demonstrate an outstanding intellectual ability, organisational skills, practical experience, and the ability to manage large and complicated workloads, as well as a high level of professional integrity. Applications will also be welcome from candidates with comparable early years' experience, for example in academia.

Candidates will be asked to express their preference(s) in terms of the jurisdiction and courts in which they would wish to be placed, and as to the duration and timing of their placement.

Number of positions

This recruitment is for the equivalent of 13 full-time appointments for the 2021/2022 legal year. The exact number of appointments will depend on the preferences of the candidates for a placement lasting three or five months (for example, if all successful candidates request a placement of three months, there will be capacity for 39 individual appointments for that period during the course of the year).

Length and periods of placement

Candidates will be asked to express a preference for a placement of three or five months. The three-month appointments will correspond to the legal terms between:

- Friday 1 October to Tuesday 21 December 2021;
- Tuesday 11 January to Wednesday 13 April 2022; and
- Tuesday 26 April to Friday 29 July 2022.

The five-month appointments will be for the periods:

- Friday 1 October 2021 – Friday 25 February 2022; and
- Tuesday 1 March – Friday 29 July 2022.

One 10-month role in the Family Division may be available between Monday 13 September 2021 and Friday 29 July 2022, depending on the availability of successful candidates.

Successful candidates will be expected to make themselves available for work during the relevant legal vacations (though not public holidays).

Assignment

Candidates will also be asked if they have any preference for the Court or Division to which they will be assigned, namely:

- Chancery Division (Business and Property Courts)
- Family Division (including the Court of Protection)
- Queen's Bench Division:
 - Commercial Court (Business and Property Courts)
 - Technology and Construction Court (Business and Property Courts)
 - Administrative Court
 - QB Civil

- No preference Applicants will be free to select as many or as few of these specialisations as they wish. Candidates will be informed of the Court to which they have been assigned at the point at which they receive the offer. While every effort will be made to assign successful candidates to their Court or Division of choice, there may be occasions on which a degree of flexibility will be required, and judicial assistants will be asked to lend support to a judge in another part of the High Court.

Nature of the work

Depending on the preferences expressed by applicants, it is intended that there will be JAs assigned to Judges of the High Court across the three Divisions of the Court. JAs will be placed with a judge or judges working in their chosen specialisation or one of their chosen specialisations. JAs will assist the judge(s) to whom they are allocated, for example by carrying out research, marking up and summarising case documents and transcripts, summarising submissions and discussing cases and hearings and providing general support for the judge(s) in the organisation of their work and hearings. The role of judicial assistant offers those in the early years of their professional practice a close view of the trial process and first instance decision-making from the perspective of the judge, for the most complex, high value and often high profile civil and family cases. The majority of the work will be based in London, but JAs may have the opportunity (but will not be required) to go on circuit.

Suitability

Typically, the candidate will have graduated with an excellent degree (2:1 or above) and have practical experience in legal research and writing, and familiarity with civil procedure (for example, it is expected that candidates will be familiar with and capable of dealing with issues arising out of CPR). Experience gained in the early years of practice – from either arm of the legal profession - is also desirable, though candidates with comparable early years' experience (for example in academia) are also eligible to apply. Candidates should understand that a judicial assistant works full-time. It is not possible to conduct professional practice or to devote significant time to external study while working as a judicial assistant.

Skills and qualifications

Excellent intellectual and legal ability is essential. The role will involve discussions with High Court judges on difficult points of law and procedure. Successful candidates will also have demonstrated an ability to formulate detailed legal arguments and opinions based on research and excellent written and oral communication skills. The role of judicial assistant will also require candidates to manage involvement in multiple cases, some of them very large and involving extensive evidence. JAs will also be expected to provide assistance to their assigned judge(s) to tight deadlines. Successful candidates will therefore have demonstrated a capacity to work effectively under pressure of time. IT skills, including in research, are also necessary criteria.

Salary

The salary offered to candidates who sign 'terms of placement' agreements with HMCTS is the pro rata equivalent of an annual salary of £30,389, payable monthly in arrears. Successful candidates in private practice or those who are unemployed will be paid a monthly fee, reflecting the rate paid to 'terms of placement' candidates. A secondment fee equivalent to the rate paid to 'terms of placement' candidates will be paid to the employer of successful candidates who are already in employment.

Covid-19

As a vital public service, the court system has used a variety of approaches to ensure that work can continue as effectively as possible during the pandemic. It is inevitable that the impact of COVID-19 will extend into the next legal year. This may mean that your placement will look slightly different

from usual. For example, you may be asked to work remotely and be flexible in the type of work you are assigned.