



GUIDANCE NOTE

THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland (JABS) invites applications from suitably qualified and experienced individuals who wish to be considered for appointment to the Office of Sheriff. This is an important opportunity to contribute to justice in Scotland.

The [Office of Sheriff Role Profile](#), provided by the Judicial Office for Scotland, provides applicants with information about the role. The salary for a full-time Sheriff is £167,167.

It is expected that successful applicants will commence training with the Judicial Institute in June 2025 and take up post on completion of this induction.

There 11 full time vacancies and all are for resident Sheriffs at the courts shown below. For all posts there is a requirement to reside within one hour's travelling distance of the court. Those appointed will be expected to remain in the location for 5 years before seeking transfer.

See further details on these vacancies and the requirements below.

Sheriffdom	Posts/Base Court(s)	Further details
Glasgow and Strathkelvin	3 x Glasgow Sheriff Court	1 x this post requires someone with considerable experience and knowledge of criminal law, particularly solemn proceedings. 2 x these posts require someone with considerable experience and knowledge of civil law and procedure. Experience in commercial actions, family actions and/or Adults with Incapacity would be advantageous but is not essential.
Grampian, Highlands and Islands	1 x Peterhead	The post holder will be expected to cover all areas of business.
Lothian and Borders	1 x Edinburgh Sheriff Court (ASSPIC) 1 x Livingston Sheriff Court	This post requires considerable experience of Personal Injury litigation at a senior level. The post holder will be expected to cover all areas of business.
South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway	1 x Ayr Sheriff Court	The post holder will be expected to cover all areas of business. There may be a requirement to work from occasionally in other courts within the Sheriffdom.

	1 x Dumfries Sheriff Court	The post holder will be expected to cover all areas of business. A background in civil practice would be desirable. There may be a requirement to work from occasionally in other courts within the Sheriffdom.
	1 x Lanark Sheriff Court	The post holder will be expected to cover all areas of business. There may be a requirement to work from occasionally in other courts within the Sheriffdom.
Tayside, Central & Fife	1 x Stirling Sheriff Court	The post holder will be expected to cover all areas of business. There may be a requirement to work from occasionally in other courts within the Sheriffdom.
North Strathclyde	1 x Dumbarton Sheriff Court	The post holder will be expected to cover all areas of business. There may be a requirement to work from occasionally in other courts within the Sheriffdom.

If invited for interview, applicants will be asked by the selection panel about their experience for each of the posts for which they have applied. They will also be asked to demonstrate that they have considered and can comply with the requirement to live within one hour's travel distance of the court and the expectation that they will remain in the post for 5 years before seeking transfer.

JABS has been informed that the Lanark post currently advertised is subject to further consideration.

As soon as the final decision on the post has been communicated to JABS we will notify applicants.

If you wish to apply for the Lanark post and/or any of the other posts advertised, please mark "Yes" in the appropriate box against the location/s for which you wish to apply. All applications will still need to be received by the closing date of 19th November 2024.

In the event it is decided that the vacancy for Lanark is not to be confirmed, any applications for it will cease to be considered further. However, if you have applied for other posts in addition to Lanark, your application will continue to be processed.

We are sorry for any inconvenience that this situation causes for potential applicants.

2. THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF ROLE PROFILE

Please read the [Role Profile](#) (produced by the Judicial Office for Scotland) on our website.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Statutory Eligibility Requirements

The eligibility for the Office of Sheriff is set out in section 14 of the [Courts Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) and is noted below.

(1) An individual is qualified for appointment to a judicial office mentioned in subsection (2) if the individual —

- (a) immediately before the appointment, held any other judicial office specified in that subsection, or
- (b) at the time of appointment—

- (i) is legally qualified, and
- (ii) has been so qualified throughout the period of 10 years immediately preceding the appointment.

(2) The judicial offices are—

- (a) Sheriff principal, (b) Sheriff, (c) summary Sheriff, (d) part-time Sheriff, (e) part-time summary Sheriff.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (1), an individual is legally qualified if the individual is a solicitor or an advocate.

3.2 Mandatory Retirement Age

There is a MRA (mandatory retirement age) of 75 for judicial office holders as defined in Section 16 of the [Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk).

4. JUDICIAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES

4.1 Skills and Qualities

We will assess each applicant against a set of skills and qualities that are necessary for the role.



The Skills and Qualities for this role can be found on our [‘What we are looking for’ page](#) on the JABS website.

4.2 Essential Criteria

Those seeking appointment should be judicial office holders or practitioners of standing, whether solicitors or advocates. They should preferably have considerable court experience.

The essential requirement for the role of a sheriff is to possess the ability and legal standing to perform the functions of the office. This requires knowledge and experience not only of civil law and practice but also that relating to summary and solemn crime.

It is essential that those applying for appointment as a sheriff who do not have knowledge or experience in each of these disciplines demonstrate the ability to acquire knowledge in unfamiliar areas of the law.

We do not expect that applicants will be familiar with all areas of a Sheriff's work. Once appointed, there will be opportunities for further study, training and development, and suitable mentoring is made available. However, it is important that a Sheriff is of sufficient legal standing to command confidence in their decisions with immediate effect, and it is critical that you can demonstrate both the ability and the motivation to succeed at this level across a broad range of civil and criminal work.

4.3 Professional Qualifications, Training and Career History

While we place great importance on the legal career of an applicant, and success in that career, we also value information about non-legal career experience, voluntary or other general experience that may be relevant to the qualities required for Judicial Office.

Judicial experience including Tribunal experience, whether part-time or otherwise, is something that we may take into account, however, it is not a requirement in Scotland for appointment to full-time Judicial Office. If you have not held Judicial Office, you should not be deterred from applying. If you have had similar experience, you should explain why you consider it relevant. You should draw attention to any aspect of your career, or any other experience, that demonstrates the qualities required for Judicial Office.

5. AM I READY?

Before applying, you may find it helpful to consider your readiness against the questions on our ['Am I Ready?' page](#) on the JABS website.

6. THE PROCESS

You can view the whole assessment process, including guidance, hints and tips on ['The Process' page](#) of our website.

7. ONLINE APPLICATION

The first time that you apply online for a judicial vacancy, you will be required to register on our website. The email registered will become the default email contact for the recruitment process. If you have any difficulties, please contact the Business Management Unit (BMU) on 0131 244 3131 or email us directly on mailbox@jabs.gov.scot.

When you submit your application, you will receive acknowledgement by email. You should contact us if you have **not** received an acknowledgement within 24 hours of submitting your application.

Please note the application system will not spell or grammar check your submission. Please ensure you read over application and copy from Microsoft Word if necessary.

The legal sections of the application are marked only by legal and judicial members of the panel. However, all members of the panel may use evidence from the application form to provide evidence of the Personal & Judicial qualities. For example, the legal written work and general writing in the application form may provide evidence of Communicating Effectively.

Applications received after 12 noon on the closing date will not be accepted.

8. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

The online system is designed to be intuitive and includes instructions for completion within the form. You should also review the [Application Section](#) of our website before completing the form. There are some areas that require instruction and these are detailed below:

8.1 Personal Information

It is mandatory to include your first name and surname, in your application. It is optional to include 'Any Other Surnames' you are known by as this may be needed in correctly identifying you for the process of eligibility, consultation and disclosure. If you have a Middle Name, it is mandatory to include this for the purposes of obtaining a Royal Warrant, should you be recommended for appointment. If you do not have a middle name, please add 'N/A'. **Applicant names and personal information will not be shared with the Panel for shortlisting but will be shared if you are invited to interview.**

There is a MRA (mandatory retirement age) of 75 for judicial office holders as defined in Section 16 of the [Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#). It is therefore mandatory to include your DoB for eligibility purposes. Applicant DoB will not be shared with the Panel. A preliminary assessment of each application is carried out by the Business Management Unit of JABS (BMU) in relation to eligibility and whether applicants meet the Age requirement. Should a concern arise at this stage in the process, the BMU will send anonymised information to the Panel to make a decision on the matter.

8.2 Nationality

It is mandatory to include your Nationality as this is used for eligibility purposes. Applicant Nationality will not be shared with the Panel. A preliminary assessment of each application is carried out by the BMU in relation to eligibility and whether applicants meet the Nationality requirement. Should a concern arise at this stage in the process, the BMU will send anonymised information to the Panel to make a decision on the matter.

8.3 Address and Contact Information

We ask that you provide the email address that you wish us to contact you on regarding your application. Please get in touch if you have included an email address which you no longer have access to. Your Address and Contact Information will not be shared with the Panel at any point.

8.4 Statutory Eligibility

You must confirm that you have read the Statutory Eligibility Criteria in this Guidance Note (Section 3). You should also give a brief description of how you meet the statutory eligibility criteria - you do not need to use the full 300 words.

8.5 Relevant Memberships in Scotland

In this section you are asked to confirm if you have a membership with the Law Society of Scotland or the Faculty of Advocates. If you have a practising membership, please ensure the dates you provide are consistent against the relevant organisation's website.

[Law Society of Scotland](#)
[Faculty of Advocates](#)

You will also be asked to confirm if you currently hold a Judicial Office, including as a tribunal member.

8.6 Education, Professional Qualifications and Training

Please give any details of your degree(s), as well as any other relevant qualifications or training completed such as devilling.

8.7 Career History

The system only allows you to enter one current role. We are aware that you may have more than one. In this instance you should enter what you consider to be your main role in the 'Current Job' section. Any other current role should be entered in the 'Previous Job' section. Where you are asked to add in your leaving date, in the box 'Dates To', enter the date that you submit your application.

If you are self-employed or a judicial office holder, use the 'Employer Name' field to state this.

8.8 Tribunal and other Judicial Appointments

Please give detail of any Judicial Appointments, including Courts and Tribunals, which you hold or have held, including dates (starting with the most recent. Please include a brief description (no more than 50 words) of work undertaken in these roles. Appointment to the Parole Board for Scotland or as a Justice of the Peace should also be noted here.

8.9 Membership of Specialist Professional Organisations

Please give details of any specialist professional organisation of which you are a member if relevant.

8.10 Any other experience and membership of organisations

Please provide any other experience of membership or organisations which is relevant to your suitability for Judicial Office, and not referred to elsewhere in your application.

8.11 Experience in Areas of Law

The purpose of this section is to let the panel see the breadth and depth of your experience in the following areas of law relevant to the roles included in this competition. This may include your experience in practice or from any Judicial role held.

There is a limit of 300 words for each section. This is your opportunity to highlight your legal experience and knowledge to the panel.

Your response should include such things as:

- Timescale – when you were involved in each area of work
- An indication of the volumes and range within each category
- You may wish to indicate any cases or transactions of particular importance or significance

It is not expected that you will have experience in all areas noted below. You are required to outline any relevant experience in various areas of law:

Criminal

Summary Criminal – including appeals

Solemn Criminal – including appeals

Civil

Family

Public Law

Commercial

Private Law (e.g., property, taxation, trusts & succession, insolvency)

Personal Injury

Other (please detail)

8.12 Posts you are applying for

By marking “yes” for the posts you wish to apply for, you are confirming the following:

- if appointed, you will expect to remain in that post for 5 years.
- you have the necessary additional legal experience where this is specified for particular roles
- you are able to meet the requirement to reside within 1 hour travel time of the Sheriff Court.

You can apply for more than one post. You must select 'No' for roles that you do not wish to apply for in order to progress to the next stage of the application.

8.13 Self-Assessment - Legal

Legal Examples

In this section we are asking you to assess yourself against **Criteria 1:**

Your self-assessment should include specific examples which demonstrate depth of knowledge, competence and experience in your area(s) of legal practice. It should also include example(s) which illustrate an ability to acquire and apply new areas of legal

knowledge in depth and demonstrate your ability to work effectively in areas of the law that may arise in the course of judicial duties.

Your assessment should demonstrate how it is relevant to the work of the role to which you aspire. You should set out specific example(s) that evidence your ability to interpret and apply the law in a manner which would be appropriate for a person holding the office. The example(s) that you choose should have a broad range, ideally be recent, and clearly demonstrate the legal competence criteria.

For information on how to complete this section of your application, please refer to the [‘What we are looking for’](#) section on our website.

There is a 1000 word limit for this section.

Legal Written Work

The panel requires a written passage(s) not exceeding a total of 1,200 words to assess for this purpose. If your written work contains a lengthy narration of the facts, please indicate here which paragraphs contain the analysis and application of the law that you wish the panel to consider (whether by highlighting parts of the document, reference to paragraph numbers or by any another means.) Any excess words will not be considered.

[More information on this can be found on our website.](#)

Legal Written Work Summary

You should use this section of the application form to explain briefly (in no more than 150 words) how and why your written work example demonstrates your skills and competence relating to Criteria 1 – Knowledge, Interpretation and Application of the law.

Legal Written Work PDF Upload

You are asked to upload **one** example of written work in PDF format which demonstrates **Criterion 1**. This example should demonstrate your knowledge of the law and your ability to interpret and apply the law.

You may refer to reported and unreported decisions of the courts or tribunals in which you have been involved, and significant pieces of legal work or other relevant work in the law for which you have been personally responsible.

Examples include:

- advice given to clients in the form of letters or memos
- opinions or notes
- written submissions or other written legal arguments
- reports
- judgments
- stated cases
- decision letters given in a judicial, tribunal or similar capacity
- written advice given internally in a firm or other institutional environment
- any other written explanation of the law, and how that applies in the circumstances of a particular case or other factual situation

Applicants are asked to choose their written work carefully, making sure that it is concise and to the point and to consider if their written work demonstrates Criteria 1 as not all legal documents are best suited to demonstrate this.

Your example should ideally be recent and should clearly demonstrate the legal competence criteria. The panel requires a written passage(s) not exceeding a total of 1,200 words to assess for this purpose. If the piece of written work you submit is shorter than 1,200 words, the panel will consider the whole document. If you submit a document that is longer than 1,200 words, **you must identify the passage(s) of up to 1,200 words** within the document which best demonstrates Criterion 1 and will be read and assessed by the panel. **If you have not clearly identified the passage(s) to be considered, then the panel will restrict their assessment to the first 1,200 words.**

You should delete or redact references to the identity of clients or others, where appropriate for reasons of sensitivity, in your written work or any other examples in your application. You should also redact your own name from the document as panel members will not see your name on the application or supporting documents. The selection panel will treat your examples in confidence. **Your written work example must be uploaded in one PDF document.**

To convert a Microsoft Word Document to PDF format you must:

1. Open the Microsoft document that you would like to convert to PDF.
2. Click 'File', then click 'Save As'
3. Click the 'File Format/ Save as type'
4. Select 'PDF' on the drop down list.
5. Click 'Export/ Save'. This will save your document as a PDF however, you will still have the original Word document.

8.14 Self-Assessment – Personal and Judicial Qualities

In this section you are required to provide at least one example for each of Criteria 2-5 below.

In addition to the [information on our website](#), you should consider the following information for this role.

The answers for these sections should give specific examples which demonstrate how you meet each criterion. We have provided the following structure below to assist with this.

- Briefly outline the situation – to give it context.
- State what you were trying to achieve.
- What action did you take? Explain what you did, how you did it and why you did it. What did you actually do? What was your contribution and role?
- Describe the result/outcome. What happened and what did you learn?

We advise you to focus on actions in the specific scenario, give different examples and use your strongest examples.

If using note form/bullet points, please ensure sufficient detail is provided.

Please do not use hyperlinks. We advise you not to use lists, generalised descriptions, assertive aspirations statements or solely referring to positions held.

There is a 300 word limit for this section.

8.15 Attending Interview – Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to considering any reasonable adjustment requests to ensure that you can participate in the appointment process fairly. You can submit a request at any point in the process by emailing us at mailbox@jabs.gov.scot.

We will consider requests on a case-by-case basis. The information you provide is not used in the selection decisions.

8.16 Conflicts of Interest

You are required to note family, personal or professional relationships with [Board members](#) (whether part of the assessment panel for this competition or not) as well as [Appointment Advisers](#). Information on members of the JABS Board and Lay and Legal Appointments Advisers is available on our website. Applicants should read the [JABS policy on conflicts of interest](#) which is on our website.

The test is whether any particular relationship might reasonably create a perception by others that you might be treated differently from other applicants.

Infrequent social interaction or simple contact with a Board member in a professional context, such as having appeared before the Board member, sitting in the same court, or having involvement in the same cases will not usually constitute a professional relationship without further involvement and does not need to be declared. However, frequent contact of this nature may constitute a professional relationship and should be declared.

8.17 Good Character and Conduct

Applicants are asked to disclose any unspent criminal convictions as well as any other issues which may call into question an individual's suitability for Judicial Office. Applicants must also disclose spent convictions unless those spent convictions are protected from disclosure by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Order 2013.

8.18 Judicial Ethics

The Judicial Office for Scotland has published guidance to Judicial Office holders on Judicial Ethics. At application you are required to confirm that you can comply with this guidance, which is available online at the [Judicial Office website](#). If invited to interview, you will be asked some questions on your ability and willingness to adhere to requirements relating to the Guidance to Judicial Office Holders on Judicial Ethics in Scotland and if necessary, give you the opportunity to address any queries or concerns arising from the [Consultation](#) process.

8.19 Diversity Questions

The Board has a duty under Section 14 of the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008 to have regard to the need to encourage diversity in the range of individuals available for selection for judicial appointments. In order to do this, the Board routinely monitors

recruitment and selection procedures. The questions are deliberately wide-ranging since we consider it important to cover all the areas relevant to Section 14 considerations.

This questionnaire will be separated from your application form. The information contained in it will not be held or otherwise processed in a manner which would allow the Board or Selection Panel Members to identify you or otherwise link that information to you. The information is held by the Business Management Unit and used to produce diversity reports for each competition, which show overall summaries and do not identify any individual.

9. ENHANCED DISCLOSURE

We are required to carry out Enhanced Disclosure checks for judicial appointments.

Should you be successful in being invited to interview, a link to the online disclosure application form and guidance will be sent to you with your outcome decision letter. You will be required to pay the cost of the Enhanced Disclosure check, which is £25.

10. CONSULTATIONS

We will ask for consultations relating to applicants who are invited to interview. These consultations will be sought from (amongst others):

- The Lord President
- Sheriffs Principal
- The Crown Agent
- Scottish Legal Complaints Commission
- Professional Bodies (such as the Faculty of Advocates and the Law Society etc)
- The Scottish Legal Aid Board

As part of the consultation process, we will instruct a third party to undertake social and wider media background checks for any candidates we are considering recommending for appointment. Personal information, including your name, email address, date of birth and address(es) for the past five years may be processed by the third party in order to carry out these checks.

11. FEEDBACK

We aim to offer feedback to those candidates who request it. However, the level of detail in the feedback will depend on the number of candidates and the resources available at the time. We are unable to offer a timescale for this feedback.

12. COMPETITION SCHEDULE

We anticipate following the key milestone dates as detailed below:

Date	Milestone
29 October 2024	Application window opens
Noon on 19 November 2024	Application window closes
November 2024 to January 2025	Shortlisting period
February to March 2025	Interview period

April 2025	Final decision meeting
May 2025	Interview outcome letters issued
May 2025	Recommendation report sent to the Scottish Government*

*Only those with a satisfactory disclosure check will be recommended for appointment.

13. COMPLAINTS

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the handling of your application, you should refer to the [Complaints Handling Procedure](#) on our website.