



**JUDICIAL
APPOINTMENTS
BOARD FOR
SCOTLAND**

THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF PRINCIPAL

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland invites applications from suitably qualified individuals who wish to be considered for appointment to the office of Sheriff Principal. The Judicial Office for Scotland has informed us that there is one position available. In the event of an unforeseen vacancy arising, applicants will be advised and asked if they would wish to be considered.

Only individuals recommended by the Board may be appointed to the office of Sheriff Principal.

2. THE OFFICE OF SHERIFF PRINCIPAL ROLE PROFILE

Please read the [role profile](#) document (produced by the Judicial Office for Scotland) on our website.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria for this appointment are:

Eligibility for the office is set out in section 14 of the Courts Reform (Scotland) Act 2014¹.

You are eligible for appointment to this judicial office if immediately before the appointment, you have held any other judicial office, the categories listed are sheriff principal, sheriff, summary sheriff, part-time sheriff, part-time summary sheriff. Or if you are legally qualified as solicitor or an advocate throughout the 10 years immediately preceding appointment.

Applications are invited from civil and criminal practitioners alike. We do not expect that any applicant will be familiar with all areas of a Sheriff Principal'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 Principal is a lawyer of sufficient standing to command confidence in his or her 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.

3.2 Professional Qualifications, Training and Career History

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

Judicial 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

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/18/section/14/enacted>

draw attention to any aspect of your career, or any other experience, that demonstrates the qualities required for Judicial Office.

4. SKILLS AND QUALITIES

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

4.1 Legal knowledge, skills and competence

4.1.1 Knowledge of the law

- High level of legal knowledge and experience, in both civil and criminal law and practice
- A high level of knowledge of the law of evidence
- A thorough knowledge of procedure appropriate to the Sheriff Court and the Sheriff Appeal Court
- A high level of knowledge of the substantive law in the area of the applicant's practice or specialism
- A well informed awareness of the areas of substantive law most commonly encountered in the Sheriff Court and the Sheriff Appeal Court

4.1.2 Interpretation and Application of the Law

- High level of skills and competence:
 - in the interpretation and analysis of case law and statute law, in both civil and criminal law and practice
 - in identifying and distinguishing issues of fact and law
- Good ability to interpret and apply the law in unfamiliar areas
- Ability to apply the law to make sustainable decisions.

4.2 Personal and Judicial Qualities

4.2.1 Strategic Objectives and Implementation

- Ability to think creatively, shape strategic objectives, lead their implementation and act decisively
- Ability to identify, build and sustain effective relationships within and beyond the Sheriffdom to facilitate the effective and efficient administration of justice, including the management of change

4.2.2 Leadership and working with others

- Ability to inspire confidence, command respect and gain commitment from others
- Ability to support and promote the professional and personal development of judicial colleagues in the Sheriffdom
- Ability to set, model and promote the highest standards of judicial conduct
- Ability to lead and manage the work of a Sheriffdom at speed and under pressure whilst maintaining judicial standards and public confidence
- Ability to lead a team effectively
- Respectful and sensitive leadership

4.2.3 Managing Work Efficiently

- Ability to manage available resources effectively, taking account of plans, priorities and risks
- Ability to organise your own time, and that of others, effectively
- Ability to manage cases efficiently and effectively
- Confidence, resolution, conscientiousness and diligence in dealing with other agencies
- Ability to deliver work at speed and under pressure.

4.2.4 Exercising judgement

- Impartiality, open-mindedness and fairness to all
- Ability to analyse and assess complex evidence and arguments
- Ability to reason clearly
- Ability to reach firm conclusions
- Ability to exercise discretion appropriately
- Confidence in judging and making independent decisions in the face of challenge

4.2.5 Communicating Effectively

- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively
- Listening with patience and respect
- Producing written work that is clear, concise and well-reasoned

5. THE PROCESS

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

6. ONLINE APPLICATION

The first time that you apply online for a judicial vacancy, you will be required to register on our website. If you have any difficulties, please contact the Business Management Unit on 0131 528 5101.

When you submit your application, you will receive acknowledgement by email.

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.

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

7. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

The online system is designed to be intuitive and includes instructions for completion. You should also see the Application section of our website before completing the form.

There are some areas that require instruction and these are detailed below:

7.1 Name

Please ensure that you complete your full name, including any middle names in your online application. This will be used for the consultation stage of the process if you are shortlisted and for the purposes of completing a Royal warrant should you be recommended for appointment.

7.2 Career history

We are aware that some of you have more than one current career, however, the system only allows you to enter one. You should enter your main role in the “Current Job” section, and the others in the Previous job section. The system will ask you for a date left for these jobs, you should enter the date that you submit the application

7.3 Self-Assessment

For information on how to complete this section of your application, please refer to the “What we are looking for” section on our website:

<https://www.judicialappointments.scot/resources/what-were-looking-for>.

7.3.1 Legal knowledge, skills and competence

In addition to the information on our website, you should consider the following information for this role.

Your self-assessment should include specific examples which demonstrate depth of knowledge, and competence in your own 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 with speed and accuracy.>

7.3.2 Written work

You are asked to upload **three** examples of written work for which **you alone** have been responsible and explain, briefly, how it demonstrates your knowledge of the law and your skills and competence in the interpretation and application of the law.

The application system has a set word limit of 150 words per example for this section, and it will not allow you to exceed this.

Your written work example must be in PDF format.

Written work should demonstrate your knowledge of the law. Examples include:

- advice given to clients in the form of letters or memos
- opinions or notes
- written submissions or other written legal argument
- 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.

The examples that you choose should have a broad range, ideally be recent, and clearly demonstrate the legal competence criteria. Choose your written work carefully, making sure that it is concise and to the point.

If your written work contains a lengthy narration of the facts, please indicate which paragraphs contain the analysis and application of the law that you wish us to consider.

You should **delete or redact any references to the identity of clients** or others in such documents. The selection panel will treat your examples in confidence.>

Your written work examples must all be uploaded in one PDF format.

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.

7.4 Location Preferences

On the form, you will be asked to indicate your preferred vacancy. The vacancies will be listed and you should select one of:

- Lothian & Borders
- North Strathclyde
- Either

8. ENHANCED DISCLOSURE

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

An application form and guidance note will be sent to you after the invitation to interview letters have been issued.

We will ask you to complete the form and bring it your interview for checking, but we will not send it to Disclosure Scotland unless you are recommended for appointment.

You are required to pay the cost of the disclosure check, which is £25.

9. FEEDBACK

We aim to offer you feedback at each stage of the process. However, the provision of feedback will depend on the number of candidates and the resources available.

10. TIMETABLE

DATE	EVENT
Thursday 13 January 2022	Advertisement published
Thursday 3 February 2022 (Noon)	Closing date for application forms
Friday 27 February 2022	Applicants notified of outcome of initial assessment
Monday 7 – Friday 11 March 2022	Interviews
Monday 21 March 2022	Board Decision Meeting
Friday 25 March 2022	Applicants notified of outcome of interview
By Monday 28 March 2022 (subject to Disclosure Scotland checks)	Recommendations for appointment* to the Scottish Government. Formal appointment by Ministers will follow.

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

11. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

We are committed to considering any reasonable adjustment requests, to ensure that you can participate in the appointment process fairly.

We will consider requests on a case-by-case basis and the information you give will not be used in the selection decisions.

If you are recommended for appointment, you should discuss any reasonable adjustment requests with the Judicial Office for Scotland.

12. 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.