



Information Pack

Vacancy for President of The Supreme Court of The United Kingdom

Role

Justices of The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom comprise the final Court of Appeal for all civil cases in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and for criminal appeals in England and Wales and Northern Ireland. With effect from 1 October 2009 the devolution jurisdiction formerly exercised by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has been exercised by the United Kingdom Supreme Court. Justices of the Supreme Court also sit in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which forms the final Court of Appeal for a number of Commonwealth countries British Overseas Territories, and Crown Dependencies. There are 12 Justices, one of whom is appointed President and, one, Deputy President.

Statutory background and jurisdiction

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom was created by the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 (the Act). Part 3 of that Act, along with Schedules 8, 9, 10 and 11 set out the jurisdiction and composition of the Court as well as provisions concerning the administration.

Potential applicants will wish to note in particular the requirements at section 27 (5) of the Act that “selection must be on merit” and at section 27 (8) of the Act which says that:

“In making selections for the appointment of judges of the Court the commission must ensure that between them the judges will have knowledge of, and experience of practice in, the law of each part of the United Kingdom”.

A vacancy arises because Lord Phillips will be retiring at the end of September 2012. There are currently two Justices who have knowledge of, and experience of practice in, the law of Scotland, namely Lord Hope and Lord Reed; and one Justice who has knowledge of, and experience of practice in, the law of Northern Ireland, namely Lord Kerr. The remaining Justices have knowledge of, and experience of practice in, the law of England and Wales.

Lord Phillips retirement will also create a vacancy for the office of President. Under section 23(5) of the Act: “Her Majesty may by letters patent appoint one of the judges to be President and one to be Deputy President of the Court”.



The Supreme Court had its first sitting on 1 October 2009 and heard its first substantive case on 5 October that year. It is located at the former Middlesex Guildhall on Parliament Square. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has moved from Downing Street to sit in the same building. The Court may, from time to time, choose to sit in other parts of the United Kingdom to hear particular cases. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council occasionally sits outside the United Kingdom.

Salary

Salary levels are set by the Senior Salaries Review Body. The current salary for the President of the Court is £214,165. (For a Justice of the Supreme Court the salary is £206,857.)

Pension

Appointment as President/a Justice of the Supreme Court brings with it eligibility for the judicial pension scheme created under the Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993. At present, contributions of 1.8% of salary up to the earnings cap (in 2011/12 £129,600) are payable in respect of widows/widowers/registered civil partners and children's pensions. As part of reforms the government is introducing to public service pension schemes, contributions towards the cost of providing personal benefits will become payable from 1 April 2012 on the whole salary at the rate of 1.28%. Details of any further proposed changes to the scheme will be published as soon as they are available.

For serving judges, who are already members of one of the judicial pension schemes, there may be some implications arising from a change of judicial office. This will depend on the individual circumstances and advice can be provided by the Judicial Reward and Pensions team in the Ministry of Justice.

Eligibility

To be eligible for appointment you must meet the following requirements.

Statutory requirement

Applicants must have held high judicial office for at least two years. ('High judicial office' is defined to include High Court Judges of England and Wales, and of Northern Ireland; Court of Appeal Judges of England and Wales, and of Northern Ireland; and Judges of the Court of Session.)

Alternatively, applicants must satisfy the judicial-appointment eligibility condition on a 15-year basis, or have been a qualifying practitioner for at least 15 years.



A person satisfies the judicial-appointment eligibility condition on a 15-year basis if he/she has been a solicitor of the senior courts of England and Wales, or barrister in England and Wales, for at least 15 years; and has been gaining experience in law during the post-qualification period.

A person is a qualifying practitioner if he/she is an advocate in Scotland or a solicitor entitled to appear in the Court of Session and the High Court of Justiciary; or he is a member of the Bar of Northern Ireland or a solicitor of the Court of Judicature of Northern Ireland.

The meaning of “gaining experience in law” is set out in section 52(2) to (5) of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 and relates to a period engaged in law-related activities.

Age

Subject to the statutory requirement above, there is no lower age limit for this appointment. A Judge of the Supreme Court is required to vacate his/her office on the day on which he/she attains the age of 70. A Judge of the Supreme Court who, immediately prior to his/her appointment, held another salaried judicial office to which he/she had been appointed prior to the commencement of the Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993 (31 March 1995) will retain the compulsory retirement date applicable in the former office.

Disqualification

You should note that the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 applies to this office.

Nationality

You need to fulfil one of the following nationality requirements – you must:

- be a citizen of the United Kingdom;
- be a citizen of the Republic of Ireland;
- be a citizen of a Commonwealth country; or
- hold dual nationality, one of which falls in one of the above categories.



Health

If recommended for appointment, you must be able to fulfil the duties of the judicial role to which you are appointed and you may be required to undergo a medical examination. Reasonable adjustments will be made if you have a disability under the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, as they are for serving judges who have such a disability.

Judicial Titles

In December 2010 Her Majesty The Queen formally agreed that every Justice of the Supreme Court should, in future, be styled as “Lord” or “Lady” as appropriate. This ensures that Justices who are not Life Peers (ie those appointed since 1 October 2009) are addressed in the same way as their colleagues who are Life Peers.

The courtesy title is conferred upon a Justice for life and takes effect from the time of their swearing-in. The title does not carry with it membership of the House of Lords.

Criteria for appointment as a Justice

The cases dealt with by the Supreme Court include the most complex in the courts of the United Kingdom and demand the deepest level of judicial knowledge and understanding, combined with the highest intellectual capacity. Successful candidates will have to demonstrate independence of mind and integrity and that they meet the criteria listed below TO AN EXCEPTIONAL DEGREE.

- Knowledge and experience of the law.
- Intellectual ability and interest in the law, with a significant capacity for analysing and exploring legal problems creatively and flexibly.
- Clarity of thought and expression, reflected particularly in written work.
- An ability to work under pressure and to produce work with reasonable expedition.

The successful candidates will also need to demonstrate the following qualities:

- Social awareness and understanding of the contemporary world.
- An ability to work with colleagues, respecting their views, but also being able to challenge and debate in a constructive way.



- A willingness and capability to participate in the wider representational role of a Supreme Court Justice, for example, delivering lectures, participating in conferences, and talking to students and other groups.
- Vision, coupled with an appreciation of the role of the Court in contributing to the development of the law.

In considering these qualities, the commission will have regard to the background and experience of the candidates.

Additional criteria for the office of President

The office of President carries a major leadership and representational role. Under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 the President has a number of specific statutory responsibilities. These include making Rules governing practice and procedure (Section 45(1)). The President also has the formal responsibility for appointing officers and staff (Section 49(1)), although under Section 48(3) of the Act the President of the Court may delegate to the Chief Executive those functions, as well as any or all of the other non-judicial functions of the Court.

The President also has the responsibility of chairing selection commissions for the appointment of Justices of the Supreme Court. The President makes final decisions on the listing of cases and the composition of panels to hear those cases, and either the President or Deputy President will normally chair panels.

In order to fulfill these responsibilities, the President is required to exercise a leadership function for what is a collegiate body. This recognises that Justices operate independently as judges, and many have their own particular individual responsibilities with external bodies. However, the President is ultimately responsible for making decisions about ways of working and other policy issues and needs an ability to persuade Justices, to mediate between them, if necessary, and to support them.

As the senior judge in the United Kingdom the President exercises a representational role, including with Parliament and the Executive. This includes discussions, and sometimes negotiations, with the Lord Chancellor over resources and on policy issues; and may include appearing before Select Committees of the UK Parliament. It may also involve discussions with the devolved administrations.

There is also a role in undertaking speaking and lecturing commitments throughout the UK and overseas, particularly in the common law world.



The Selection Process

Applications should be returned by 5pm on Thursday 19 April to Jenny Rowe at the address given at the end of this pack. Applicants will need to provide a letter with evidence to support how they meet each of the criteria and qualities set out above, a short CV and examples of extra-curricular speeches or publications, which provide evidence against the criteria. Serving judges should also submit copies of **two judgments only** where their contribution has advanced legal thinking or changed the existing law, with a brief explanation of why those judgments have been chosen. The selection commission may ask for further information. Applicants are also asked to complete a diversity and equality questionnaire, which is **attached** to this pack.

The leading candidates will be invited to meet the commission before the final decision is made and interviews will take place towards the end of May. Candidates invited to interview will be asked to make a short presentation on a topic to be advised.

Applicants should note that the statutory consultation process is lengthy and that the final outcome of the competition is unlikely to be known before the end of June.

The selection commission comprises:

Lord Phillips	President
Lord Hope	Deputy President
Professor Nichola Rooney	Judicial Appointments Commission for Northern Ireland
Sir Muir Russell KCB	Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland
Christopher Stephens	Judicial Appointments Commission for England and Wales



Data Protection Act

When writing to the statutory consultees, the selection commission will wish to send the consultees copies of the application letters and CVs submitted by applicants. If there is any information you would wish to be redacted before it is copied and sent to consultees please would you indicate this when you submit your application.

Contact details and further information

If you need any further information please contact:

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