

An Coimisiún um Cheapacháin Bhreithiúnacha Judicial Appointments Commission



Guidance on References

Three references are required in support of any application for judicial office (other than in the case of serving judges, who must supply one).

Applicants for judicial office and referees should be aware that the Commission places particular value on references as a guide to the abilities and qualities of an applicant and will take particular account of the following factors:

- 1) The experience and professional standing of the referee;
- 2) The extent of the referee's professional knowledge of, and familiarity with, the applicant's career; and
- 3) The detail contained in the reference and the extent to which it is grounded on the personal experience of the referee.

The Commission will particularly appreciate references which are demonstrably objective, specific and evidence based, and expects that at least one reference would come from a person in a senior position who has had the opportunity of observing and assessing the applicant over a period of time in a work environment. For practitioners

who have regularly appeared in proceedings before the Court to which they are applying, a reference from a judge of that Court who is in a position to evaluate their proficiency as a lawyer and their experience of practice and procedure in that Court will be an advantage.

The attention of referees is drawn to the Indicative Statement of Requisite Knowledge, Skills and Attributes published by the Commission as a general guide to the qualities the Commission seeks to assess.

The Commission values the overall assessment of the referee and will consider any matters which the referee considers relevant. However, referees are asked to address the applicant's suitability under the following specific headings:

- 1) Knowledge and experience: including knowledge and experience of practice and procedure in the Court to which the applicant is seeking to be appointed and relevant professional education and training programmes.
- 2) Skills: including the capacity to apply such knowledge and experience (both of law and procedure) to achieve a just outcome in accordance with law, and communication skills, particularly in group situations.
- 3) Attributes: qualities and characteristics that make the applicant suitable for judicial office, including independence, integrity, diligence and a commitment to the fair and impartial application of the law.
- 4) Further matters: Any other matter the referee considers relevant to the Commission's assessment of the applicant.

The Commission places significant reliance on references. It does appreciate the burden this place on referees. However the Commission would emphasise that it values references which are rigorous, objective and discriminating, and make an honest

assessment of the candidate, both in their own right, and relatively (in comparison to comparable practitioners, academic lawyers or members of the judiciary). The Commission will discount references which it considers to be unjustifiably enthusiastic or insufficiently discriminating. References which include specific examples that demonstrate how the applicant possesses the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes for appointment as a judge of the Court to which the applicant is seeking to be appointed are of much greater assistance to the Commission.

References will be treated in strict confidence by the Commission.

Frequently asked questions

I previously submitted a reference on behalf of a referee. Do I need to submit a new reference?

Yes, the reference form has been updated with added fields and more detailed information to be provided by referees. Any previous references you may have provided on behalf of an applicant are no longer valid.

Is the process for submitting a reference the same as before?

No, the process has been amended. Previously, once an applicant submitted their reference a referee would automatically be contacted through our online portal. This is no longer the case. An applicant should contact their referee(s) as early as possible in their application process and inform the referee that references are now provided via email to the Commission's email address.

How do I find the new reference form?

It is available to download on the Judicial Appointments Commission's website at www.judicialappointments.ie under the Documentation tab. Alternatively, you can

email the Commission at info@judicialappointments.ie and a reference form will be sent to you.

When completing the form, is there anything I should pay particular attention to?

There is a word count for a number of questions on the reference form. This word count must be strictly adhered to. Any references which exceed the word count will be returned to the referee.

Once I have completed the form, what is the next step?

When you are happy with the reference you have provided, save the reference form as a Word document only and email it to the following address only:

info@judicialappointments.ie

Is there anything I should avoid when returning my reference?

Please do not save the document as a PDF. We can accept Word documents only. No handwritten references will be accepted. Only a referee should send the completed reference to the Commission.

How long do I have to complete a reference?

All applicants are advised to contact their referee as early as possible in the application process to give their referee(s) ample time to complete a reference. It is the applicant's responsibility to inform the referee of the available timeframe.

If you have any queries, please contact info@judicialappointments.ie and the office of the Commission will assist you.

Please note a reply may be delayed when the office of the Commission are experiencing a high volume of correspondence.

