

## Role of the judge

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### Introduction

The judge in an Irish courtroom usually sits on a raised platform at the top of the court and wears white collars and a black gown.

In the past, judges in Ireland were referred to as "My Lord", or "His Lordship". Now, they are addressed as "Judge" or referred to as "The Court". The only exception to this is in the case of the Chief Justice and Presidents of the various lower courts, who are addressed by their titles.

### Judgments and juries

#### If there is no jury

If there is no [jury](#) in a case, it is the judge who decides which party wins and which party loses.

The judge listens to the [evidence](#) of both sides and to the submissions of the [barristers](#) (or [solicitors](#)). The judge may ask questions of any [witness](#) and of the barristers (or solicitors).

The judge may give the judgment in the case at the end of the trial, or they may "reserve" the judgment. When a judgment is reserved, the judge will take time to consider the case and then at some later stage deliver the judgment.

#### If there is a jury

If there is a jury in the case, it is usually the jury that decides the outcome of the case.

The judge provides guidance to the jury and makes sure that the trial is run properly. The jury in a [criminal trial](#) has the very important function of deciding whether the person accused of the crime is guilty or not guilty.

You can read more about the [role of the jury](#) in the courtroom.

### Appointment of judges

Judges in Ireland are appointed by the [President](#) acting on the advice of the Government.

#### Previous Judicial Appointments Advisory Board

Until 2025, the Government, in most cases, decided who to appoint as a judge after it had been advised by the Judicial Appointments Advisory Board. This Board identified and informed the Government about suitable barristers and solicitors who had applied for the job. The Government was not bound by the advice and recommendations of the Judicial Appointments Advisory Board.

#### New Judicial Appointments Commission

Since 1 January 2025 the Judicial Appointments Advisory Board has been replaced by a new body, the [Judicial Appointments Commission](#). The Commission reviews applicants for all judicial vacancies and makes recommendations for the Government to consider. Now the Government can only select a person who has been recommended by the Commission. However, it can reject the recommendation and ask the Commission to restart the process.

Membership of the Judicial Appointments Commission consists of:

- The Chief Justice
- The president of the court concerned
- 2 other judges nominated by the Judicial Council
- The [Attorney General](#)
- 4 lay people appointed by the Minister for Justice

### Experience needed to become a judge

Judges must have at least 10 years' experience as a barrister or solicitor before being appointed to the District Court of the Circuit Court and at least 12 years' experience before being appointed to the High Court, Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court. Usually, they have many more years of experience before they are appointed.

### Complaints about judges

If you are not satisfied with the outcome or judgment of a criminal trial or civil action, you should get legal advice. You may be able to appeal a judgment to a higher court.

#### Who can complain?

Complaints about the conduct of a judge can be made to the [Judicial Council](#). You cannot complain to the Judicial Council about the outcome of your case.

You can complain to the Judicial Council if you:

- Were directly affected by the alleged misconduct
- Witnessed the alleged misconduct

You can complain about the conduct of a judge on behalf of:

- A child, if you are their parent or guardian
- An incapacitated person, if you have legal authorisation

An authorised officer of the Bar Council of Ireland can make a complaint on behalf of a barrister, and an authorised officer of the Law Society of Ireland can make a complaint on behalf of a solicitor.

#### Time limits for complaints

You must make the complaint within 3 months of the alleged misconduct. The time limit may be extended if the Judicial Council decides that there are good reasons for doing so.

#### How to complain

You can make a complaint online by completing the [online complaint form](#) on the Judicial Council's website.

You can also fill out a [complaint form \(pdf\)](#) and post it to the Registrar to the Judicial Conduct Committee (see 'Contacts' below).

You can read more about how complaints are handled and the types of outcomes you can expect on the [Judicial Council's website](#).

### Judicial assistant

Judges appointed after 2011 are [assigned a judicial assistant](#) rather than a tipstaff or crier.

Some judicial assistants are assigned to the work directly with judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court and Circuit Court.

Assistants assigned to specific judges assist the judge with:

- Research
- Preparing for cases
- Proof-reading
- Communicating with the parties to a case

They also combine the role of judicial assistant with that of the traditional tipstaff or crier.

There are still a small number of tipstaff who usually work with judges appointed up to 2011.

#### Judicial Research Office

Other judicial assistants are assigned to the [Judicial Research Office \(JRO\)](#), where they are made available to judges without a designated judicial assistant.

The JRO completes research, prepares material for publication, compiles handbooks, and proof-reads judgments and other documents for judges across all jurisdictions.

### Contacts

#### The Judicial Council

Green Street Courthouse  
Green Street  
D07 W568

Tel: 01 888 6261

Homepage: <https://judicialcouncil.ie/judicial-conduct-committee/>

Contact Form: <https://judicialcouncil.ie/contact/>

Email: [info@judicialcouncil.ie](mailto:info@judicialcouncil.ie)

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