

Sheriff 25 Competition

Questions and Answers - 1 November 2024

This Q and A provides an outline on a number of questions and associated responses which arose at the Sheriff 25 information session, held on 23rd October 2024, as well as some detail on subsequent questions which have been received by JABS seeking clarification on the roles being recruited.

Should you have any further queries on the Sheriff 2025 recruitment round, please direct these to our mailbox at mailbox@jabs.gov.scot. We will continue to update this document should further questions be received and provide responses which may be of interest to potential applicants.

Q1. Are offers of posts made solely on the basis of performance at interview and if not, how is the process scored between written work, application form and interview?

The application is scored against both the Legal aspects and the Personal & Judicial competency criteria outlined in the advert and guidance and this is then assessed alongside the scores received at interview.

The panel takes a holistic view, considering all of the evidence it has gathered through the application form, interview and written work before reaching a final score and recommendation. An example of how this might work would be when assessing the Communicating Effectively score, the panel will consider the legal written work that has been provided, alongside the presentation of information within the application form, before reaching the overall score for this competency.

Q.2. Do you have to anonymise the examples of written work?

Yes, applicants are asked to anonymise the examples of written work that are provided. However any information provided throughout the whole application and selection process is treated in strictest confidence.

JABS process includes scoring applications as blindly as far as is practical and therefore you should not leave your name at the bottom of the written work as this may undermine this process.

Q.3. Can you advise more about what you expect for the non-legal answers? These questions are very widely drafted.

These questions are deliberately open, and it is up to applicants to consider the evidence they can provide to demonstrate how they meet the criteria. There is information and guidance on the [JABS website](#) about the criteria and competency-based questions.

A key consideration would be to make sure you understand what it is being looked for, and the skills that are required in the role. You should read the application carefully as this will provide details of what criteria are being used to assess the

examples you provide and think of what you need to provide to evidence the skills asked.

Q.4 Are the lay and legal members trained in dealing with neurodivergent candidates?

It is not unusual for neurodivergent candidates to apply, and progress through all stages of JABS competitions. We encourage applicants to let the Business Management Unit know of any issues that the panel should be aware of either prior to their assessment or in order that reasonable adjustments can be put in place ahead of interview. This can be done at any time during the process by contacting mailbox@jabs.gov.scot. All information is treated in the strictest confidence.

Q.5. Can you explain the points system? How many points must you reach? How many points are given to status i.e. how many points for being a Solicitor, Solicitor Advocate, Advocate etc?

The panel considers the candidate's experience and skills relative to the post or posts for which they have applied. Candidates must demonstrate how they meet the criteria for the role and the assessment and any score awarded is based on the evidence provided. The threshold for being appointed will vary depending on the quality and quantity of the applications received for each individual recruitment round and/or role. No points are awarded solely based on a candidate's profession.

Q.6. How many points are given for the written answers and the written work example. What is expected for the written work?

The written answers on the application form and the written work submitted all provide evidence to the panel of the candidate's skills and abilities against the criteria required.

You will be asked to submit one or more pieces of legal written work for which you alone have been responsible. You should explain, briefly (in no more than 150 words), how it demonstrates your knowledge of the law, and your skills and competence in the interpretation and application of the law.

Examples of written work include:

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

The example 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, you should specify in the description which paragraphs contain the analysis and application of the law that you want us to consider. If you do not highlight or identify your chosen text, the panel will only consider the first 1200 words of your written work submission and will not read or assess beyond this point.

Q.7. Is there any scope for part-time working for any of these posts (in the sense of working fewer than five days per week rather than sitting as a part-time sheriff with other employment)? If so, are there any restrictions on working pattern?

The posts advertised are full time posts. It may, however, be useful to note that a full-time judicial office holder is deemed to work 215 days per year and the precise sitting pattern and days of the week required to sit is likely to differ depending operational needs and the needs of the office. Any specific working patterns would require to be discussed with the Sheriff Principal but are not guaranteed.

Q.8 I am in the process of completing an application for the Office of Sheriff. Upon reviewing the “Mindset Wheel” I realised I needed further clarity on the significance of the principles in the centre of the wheel. My interpretation is that by evidencing the sub-criteria for the skills and qualities categories, I will implicitly demonstrate the seven mindset principles. Can you please confirm if my understanding is correct or do I have to specifically refer to each of the principles in the criterion answers? - The principles are the 6 principles of the code of judicial ethics.

In the centre of the “wheel” describing the criteria are the 6 principles of the code of judicial ethics. These underpin all judicial roles and candidates should have these at the centre of their thinking in making an application. Specific questions will be asked about this area at the interview stage, when candidates will be asked for evidence of how they would comply with the code. Candidates do not have to explicitly refer to these in answering the personal and judicial skills questions on the application form, but should view them as the context for the whole application.