



**Scenario Test Feedback Report**  
**116 Deputy District Judge (Civil)**  
**June 2019**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide general feedback on candidate performance in the 116 Deputy District Judge (Civil) online scenario test.

The report describes how the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) developed the test and marking schedule, how the test was structured, and how the number of candidates shortlisted for progression was attained. Additionally, it provides information on the overall performance of candidates in the test, identifying areas of good and poor performance and sharing more detailed comments in relation to each of the 2 questions in the test.

## **Competency Framework**

The test was designed to assess the following competencies:

Exercising Judgement  
Possessing and Building Knowledge  
Assimilating and Clarifying Information  
Working and Communicating with Others  
Managing Work Efficiently

The competencies were developed so that candidates could demonstrate the proficiency and capability transferable to the role from other contexts. The specific bullet points under each competency heading were designed to reflect the aptitude and faculty that an effective Deputy District Judge is expected to have. This enabled us to assess candidates in a fair and consistent way.

## **Development of the test**

The test and marking schedules were devised by 2 experienced District Judges

In common with all the selection tools developed for this exercise, the scenario questions were designed to assess relevant transferable skills and to minimise the extent to which candidates might be advantaged or disadvantaged by their professional background.

The JAC Advisory Group, which is composed of members of the judiciary and representatives of the legal professions and chaired by a lay JAC Commissioner, offered advice and guidance during their development.

The effectiveness of the test was assessed by means of a dry run with a range of volunteers from relevant candidate groups. This provided an opportunity to trial the test material and make any necessary amendments.

## **Structure of the test**

The test was hosted on Google Forms. Candidates accessed the test using a unique numeric code, issued to them by email with the test instructions. The test was 40 minutes long. Candidates were presented with a scenario and 2 questions.

The situations used in the questions were based on potential real-life situations that may be encountered by a Deputy District Judge. Candidates were provided with instructions which included a list of reading material, one week in advance of the test.

The candidate acted as a Deputy District Judge with a busy list consisting of civil applications. An application was made by a claimant who had been seriously injured. The candidate was asked what order they would make and what criteria they applied in arriving at their decision.

The candidate was then required to make a decision about costs and explain the reasoning behind their decision.

Candidates were required to provide narrative responses to each of the 2 questions. Each question had no word limit and there were a maximum amount of 150 marks available. The word limit and marks for each question were as follows:

Question 1: 150 marks no word limit

Question 2: 150 marks no word limit

### **Marking schedule**

A marking schedule was provided to the panels. A maximum of 300 marks were available.

### **Marking of the test**

The candidate's test submissions were anonymised and marked by a panel of judicial members. JAC staff provided a full briefing to the markers at the outset of marking the papers. There were 5 judicial members involved in the marking process.

698 candidates took the test. A 7% sample of reports were selected for moderation in addition to those already discussed at the calibration meetings. Those selected included the scripts identified as candidates for moderation by markers; samples of the high, low and mid scoring test papers; all test papers close to the prospective cut off point for invitation to selection days; and a further random sample.

Moderation took the form of markers cross checking each other's work. The moderation process concluded that the panels had been consistent and fair.

In line with JAC Policy, a Senior Selection Exercise Manager and the JAC Commissioner assigned to the selection exercise undertook separate quality assurance checks. Their independent conclusion was that marking had been robust and consistent.

### **Distribution of scores**

732 candidates were invited to take the test

34 candidates withdrew from the process

698 candidates took the test.

58 candidates were out on time

640 candidates completed the test

The scoring process was as follows: all candidates were scored on their answers to the test based on the marking schedule. All candidates were then ranked in order of merit from first to last based on the average percentage score (further outlined below).

This provided a merit list determining how many candidates would be invited to the interview stage based on the approach outlined. The highest 394 scoring candidates from the scenario test were shortlisted through to selection days.

We do not have a pre-determined pass mark for the test; However, candidates must score a minimum of 30%. The line of shortlisting is determined by the relationship between the relative performance of candidates against each other in any given test, and how many slots there are for the next stage of the selection exercise. For this exercise the score at which the line of shortlisting fell was 47% and above.

The highest and lowest marks awarded are shown in the table below:

<b>Distribution of marks</b>	<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Overall Total</b>
<b>Highest score</b>	150/150 (2 candidates)	150/150 (7 candidates)	280/300 (1 candidate)
<b>Lowest score</b>	5/150 (1 candidate)	0/150 (8 candidates)	35/300 (3 candidates)

### **Approach to shortlisting**

When the JAC receives notification from HMCTS confirming the final number of vacancies for the requested post, calculations are made to establish how many candidates will be taken to selection day (usually at a ratio of 2 or 3 candidates interviewed for each vacancy). This allows us to estimate the number of candidates we need to progress after the shortlisting stages until we reach the selection day ratio.

For this exercise we received a vacancy request to fill 200 posts. We therefore planned the selection exercise based on inviting around 400 candidates to selection day. To prevent a significant drop from the substantial number of candidates who applied to fill the much smaller number of selection day slots, we planned to have shortlisting stages as part of the selection process.

All candidates who applied for the exercise were invited to sit the first stage of shortlisting, the online qualifying test. Candidates who passed were invited to take the second stage of shortlisting, the online scenario test. The scenario test was marked by a panel of judicial members. Seven hundred thirty-two (732) candidates were invited to take the online scenario test. Six Hundred and ninety-eight (698) candidates completed the test.

We planned to take 400 candidates to the second stage interview.

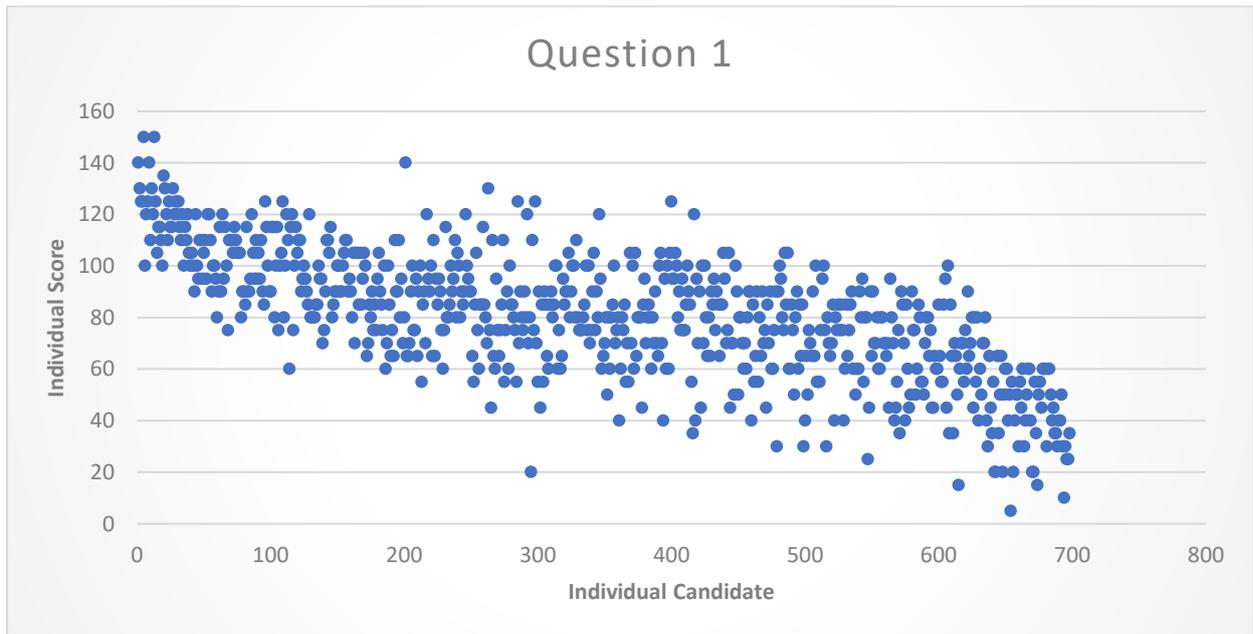
The average percentage score for each candidate is used to rank all candidates in order of merit, with the highest combined score as the most meritorious, and the lowest score as the least meritorious.

The number of slots available in the next stage of the process is then applied onto the merit list to create the initial cut off line.

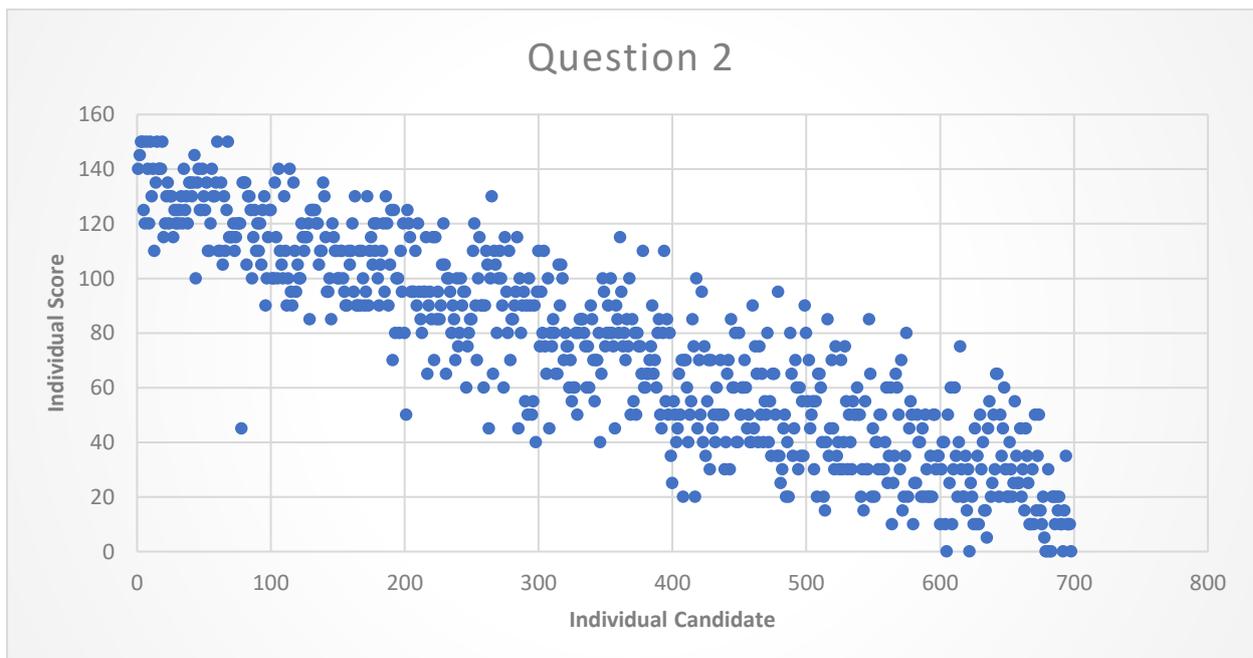
After applying the above process, 394 candidates were invited to progress to the next stage of the selection exercise.

We therefore do not have a pre-determined pass mark for the test; the line of shortlisting is determined by the relationship between the relative performance of candidates against each other in any given test, and how many slots there are for the next stage of the selection exercise.

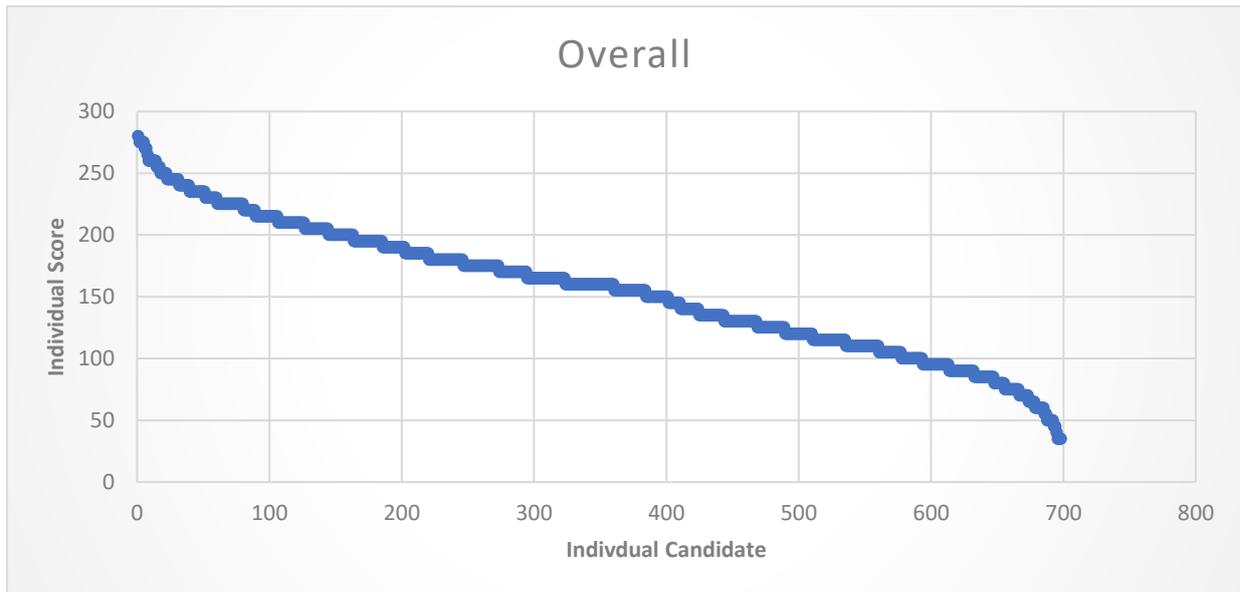
### Spread of scores



The average candidate score for this question was 80



The average candidate score for this question was 74



The average candidate score for this test overall was 156.

### Feedback from the marking panels

In advance of marking the test the marking panels were instructed to consider any common themes in the candidates' answers that could be included in the feedback report, which can be seen below.

#### Question 1

**Candidates were required to identify the correct criteria required to arrive at a decision and decide what order to make.**

Candidates who scored well, included most or all of the following in their answers:

- **The relevant legislation and specific rules;**
- **All of the criteria required by the court;**
- **A detailed conclusion**

#### Question 2

**Candidates were required to make a decision about costs explaining the reasons for their decision.**

Candidates who scored well, included most or all of the following in their answers.

- **The relevant legislation and specific rules to be considered when making an order.**
- **Detailed reasons for their decision**

## **Feedback from candidates**

After the online scenario test, candidates were invited to complete an anonymous candidate survey. 271 candidates responded to the survey. Based on the results of the survey:

### **I was provided with sufficient preparatory material to answer the scenario test.**

- 89 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 7 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 4 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### **The scenario test gave me the opportunity to show how I would deal with the type of situation that could arise with this role**

- 83 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 11 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 6 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### **The scenario test was accessible in terms of format, language used and topics covered.**

- 89% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 5% neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### **I am confident in the scenario test as a JAC selection tool**

- 62 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 25 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 13 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed

### **The scenario test was easy to complete**

- 32% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 35% neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 33% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

### **I found it useful there was no word count on the scenario test**

- 79 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 18 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 3 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed

It was agreed that the candidate feedback for the situational judgement and critical analysis test for Deputy District Judge would be published with the scenario candidate feedback. This is provided below.

## **Feedback from candidates**

After the online situational judgement and critical analysis test, candidates were invited to complete an anonymous candidate survey. 1059 candidates responded to the survey. Based on the results of the survey.

**How would you rate the quality of the customer service you received from JAC staff during the qualifying test process?**

- 0 % of candidates selected poor – very poor
- 6 % of candidates selected fair
- 66 % of candidates selected good – excellent
- 28 % NA

**I understood from the instructions what was expected during the qualifying test**

- 91 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 3 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 6 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**The situational judgement test enabled me to demonstrate how I would tackle daily challenges working in a court or tribunal**

- 76 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 19 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 5 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**I am confident in the situational judgement test as a JAC selection tool**

- 55 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 34 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 11 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**The critical analysis test enabled me to demonstrate how I would analyse facts to form a judgement**

- 56 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 31 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 13 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**I am confident in the critical analysis test as a JAC selection tool**

- 54 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 35 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 11 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**The qualifying test was accessible in terms of format, language used and topics covered**

- 87 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 9 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 3 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

- 1% NA

**The qualifying test was easy to complete.**

- 60 % of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 27% neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 13 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**I found it useful taking one qualifying test for two aligned competitions.**

- 54% of candidates either agreed or strongly agreed
- 18 % neither agreed nor disagreed and
- 4 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 24 % NA