

# What Does a Judge Do?

A judge presides over courts of law and makes legal decisions (known as judgments) based on the evidence presented to them and the existing, relevant laws.

A judge is also responsible for deciding the extent of punishments, or sentences that the defendant receives during a trial.



## Qualities of a Judge

To become a judge, you have to be able to cope under pressure. You must be able to confidently handle a great deal of responsibility. You will also need to have a firm approach to decision making and be able to present your opinion in a powerful and persuasive manner.



## Steps to Becoming a Judge

1 Study law in university and earn a law degree.

2

Qualify as a solicitor or a barrister.

Click on each to learn how!

3

Practise law for 10 – 12 years.

4

Apply for and earn your judgeship.

New judges must take an oath pledging to be completely independent in the performance of their duties and to uphold the law.

They must work as a district judge for at least 12 years before applying to become a High Court or Supreme Court Judge.



### Salary Range

€130k – €208k per year

Salaries vary based on employer, location, experience, duties, and role.



# Courts

In Ireland there are two types of court case:

## Civil Actions

Civil actions are taken by individuals against other individuals or organisations.

These kinds of cases include personal injury claims as a result of road traffic accidents, breach of contract actions and disputes over rights of way or planning permission.

The purpose of a civil claim is to seek compensation or to recover money owed.



## Criminal Prosecutions

Criminal prosecutions are handled by the State, usually through the Director of Public Prosecutions. They deal with things considered illegal, such as murder, rape, theft, and robbery.

The aim of the criminal law is to punish, usually through a jail sentence or a fine.



In Ireland, there are five distinct types of court:

### **District Court**

District Court judges handle a wide range of matters, including minor criminal offenses, family law cases, licensing matters, and civil disputes involving lower monetary amounts. There is no jury present in these cases.

### **Circuit Court**

Circuit Court judge sits with a jury and can hear any civil and criminal cases, except the most serious offences such as murder and rape.

### **High Court**

The High Court is based in Dublin.

High Court judges handle a wide range of civil and criminal cases, including judicial review, personal injury claims, family law matters, and more. They may also sit as trial judges in criminal cases where a jury is not present.



### **Court of Appeal**

The Court of Appeal judges hear appeals in both criminal cases and civil cases if someone is unhappy with the decision made in a lower court.

### **Supreme Court**

The Chief Justice leads the Supreme Court. They preside over important cases and have a significant role in setting legal precedents.

Justices of the Supreme Court hear cases and participate in decision-making.