

JOB DESCRIPTION

POINT RATING EVALUATION PLAN

Working Title	Name
Judicial Assistant – Court of Appeal of Alberta	Judicial Assistant – Court of Appeal of Alberta

Position Number	Reports to Position No., Class & Level	Division, Branch/Unit:	Ministry
	Justices - Functionally / Judicial Assistant Team Lead - Administratively	Court and Justice Services (CJS)	Justice and Solicitor General (JSG)

Present Classification	Requested Classification
015LA2	

Dept ID	Program Code	Project Code (if applicable)
		N/A

PURPOSE: Give a brief summary of the job, covering the main responsibilities, the framework within which the job has to operate and the main contribution to the organization (see [Section 2.3](#)).

Judicial Assistants are senior executive assistants, providing comprehensive administrative support for the Justices of the Court of Appeal of Alberta, the highest Court in the Province. As the final court of appeal in Alberta, the public looks to this Court as a leader in the hearing and deciding of legal questions. Judicial Assistants assist Justices of the Court of Appeal in meeting their constitutional responsibilities and their responsibilities to the citizens of Alberta. The matters dealt with are frequently complex and diverse. In particular, Judicial Assistants are responsible for managing the calendars of Justices and for documenting and processing all related budgetary expenses, claims, and/or allowances either digital or paper based.

Judicial Assistants ensure that decisions/judgments issued by the Court of Appeal are timely and accurate. Due to the significance and impact of these decisions on the public, lower courts and the legal community, these decisions are subject to intense scrutiny and must meet the highest standards. The Court of Appeal is often the final court for most legal issues as the Supreme Court of Canada hears, on average, fewer than 10 cases each year originating from Alberta.

Judicial Assistants confirm case citations, locate and check quotations, produce judgments from creation to filing, and research and draft correspondence and memoranda. Case editing done by the Judicial Assistants is more complex and intense than in the lower courts due to the relatively high percentage of detailed written judgments issued by the Court of Appeal. Judicial assistants have to regularly collaborate with their peers to coordinate materials for each member of the judicial panel.

Judicial Assistants represent the judiciary and receive inquiries from senior personnel in other divisions and/or agencies such as Federal Judicial Affairs, the Canadian Judicial Council, the National Judicial Institute, justices across the country, other government offices and officials, external agencies, members of the Bar, the academic community, the media and the public. They must demonstrate a high level of maturity, independent judgment, initiative and problem-solving skills.

The incumbent must respond effectively to complex issues and must take and initiate appropriate action. These functions necessitate strong problem-solving and decision-making skills. Sound judgment in applying policies, procedures and

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established practices is essential.

PURPOSE

Judicial Assistants are highly skilled, motivated and creative in managing and resolving sometimes competing demands inherent in workloads of the members of the judiciary in order to deliver quality service. Where issues are not clearly defined, the Judicial Assistants draw on experience and breadth of knowledge to initiate and implement innovative solutions appropriate to the situation and establish priorities to complete their work.

The incumbents work closely with management and staff in all areas of the Court of Appeal, and as required, with the Office of the Chief Justice of Alberta.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES: The purpose of the job can be broken down in different responsibilities and end results. Each end result shows what the job is accountable for, within what framework and what the added value is. Normally a job has 4-8 core end results. For each end result, approximately 3 major activities should be described (see [Sections 2.1](#) and [2.2](#)).

Key Duties:

1. Manage Justices' Mail, Calendars and Oversee Justices' Sitting Assignments

- Provide timely, effective diary management by prioritizing incoming and outgoing correspondence for responses and follow-up action.
- Manage the Justices' digital and paper calendars, prioritize and/or flag and coordinate meetings, conference calls and other events taking into account frequent changes, constant reprioritization and the need to follow up to ensure prompt responses or action. Many meetings involve the judiciary from various courts, or senior contacts from various professional, academic and government agencies. Frequent revision is required to ensure each judge's calendar is as current as possible and priorities are flagged for their attention.
- May be asked to receive and review all incoming mail and other internal and external correspondence. Evaluate the correspondence to identify those items requiring priority attention of the Justices, and with direction, determine those that can be allocated or redirected for action. Follow up on the preparation of responses.
- Compile detailed hearing books for all Court of Appeal sittings, including applications, appeals, appeal conference hearings, judicial dispute resolution proceedings and ensure that all appellate material is available for the judges' use.
- Coordinate and track delivery of appeal books and other materials sent to and from Edmonton and Calgary, the Northern Courts (Northwest Territories and Nunavut), ensuring they arrive in a timely manner.
- Ensure no conflicts exist with the Justices' sitting assignments. If a conflict exists, advises the Justices and recommends solutions to resolve the conflicts.

2. Process and Reconcile Justices' Budgetary Expenses, Claims and Allowances

- Closely manage all aspects of travel arrangements, via electronic and paper formats.
- Prepare and reconcile expense accounts for the Justices. Conference coordination and travel arrangements may involve hotel, air travel, car rental, and conference registrations. Effective coordination requires the incumbent to anticipate and be proactive with frequent changes to travel plans regardless of time frames and scope of changes, all within the Federal Commissioner's Rules and Guidelines.
- Reconcile travel, incidental, dental and medical claims. Become familiar with and interpret amendments to the Judges' Travel Expense Guidelines, Dental and Health Plans, advising the Justices of the changes.
- Maintain and review incidental allowance budgets of the Justices and related duties as requested.

3. Issue/Project Management

- Work independently on special ongoing and non-recurring projects and assignments as directed. This task requires the incumbent to research, collect, compile and analyze relevant data and report on findings.
- As requested, help develop, provide input on, or update various internal protocols and/or procedures and manuals relating to the Judicial Assistant position that improves the effectiveness and efficiencies of Court operations.
- Coordinate and oversee the planning of retirement and other social functions on behalf of the Justices.
- Coordinate articling student bar admissions with Justices, Students-at-Law, Registry, including preparing certain aspects of draft speeches.
- Coordinate judicial dispute resolution conferences and meetings with counsel in private chambers, at the request of the Justices.

4. Committee Work

- All Justices are members of a variety of internal and external committees relating to justice issues and Judicial Assistants assist the Justices in organizing committee meetings, arranging meeting venues, teleconference facilities and other technical support.
- Judicial Assistants attend committee meetings as assigned.
- Judicial Assistants prepare meeting books and circulate minutes when approved. They also ensure all outstanding issues are attended to after the meeting.

5. Research of Legal Issues

- Confirm and verify text, case and statute citations, necessitating strong research skills and accuracy as well as the ability to use the law library and computer database systems (CAMS, Alberta Courts Internet/Intranet, Quicklaw, Quick-cite, QP Source (Statutes), Adobe, Westlaw Canada, CrimJI, LINKS, Maritime Law Books, Federal Statutes and Regulations, Alberta Statutes and Regulations and Rules of Court).
- Review background documentation and factual information and bring matters of discrepancy or potential concerns to the Justices' attention.

6. Prepare and Process Judgments

- Prepare draft electronic judgments in accordance with established protocols and legal criteria set out in Court of Appeal Guidelines.
- Prepare and verify case and statute citations in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Case Naming Guidelines Canadian Citation Committee and the Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation (McGill Guide).
- Review draft judgments to ensure accuracy of spelling, grammar, and citation references.
- Scrutinize, revise and finalize judgments for correct grammar, spelling and citation references and examine relevant material for any special status, seals or restrictions.
- Demonstrate intermediate to advanced knowledge of legal procedures, terminology, court documents, litigation formats and processes.
- Act as a check to ensure that judgments are understandable and use plain English in accordance with current standards.
- Comply with directives of the Privacy Checklist for Judgment Preparation with respect to all publication bans/orders, ensure that identifying information compromising privacy rights of parties and witnesses is removed, and liaise with the Court Privacy Officer or Court of Appeal Legal Counsel on privacy issues as set out in the Alberta Courts Privacy Protocol and Electronic Judgement Protocol.
- Comply with the Court of Appeal Manual of Style.
- Circulate draft judgments to the Court in accordance with established procedures, review responses, and liaise with the Justices to implement any required changes prior to filing of the judgment.
- Track reserved judgments of the Court and advise Court members of their status.
- Liaise with the Scheduling and Business Analyst in providing statistics to be submitted to the Chief Justice of Alberta and to the Canadian Judicial Council.

- Recognize and maintain confidentiality of judicial decisions prior to release.
- Transcribe dictated judgments and other correspondence.
- Document and file management - tracks multiple drafts and revisions effectively, maintaining accurate version control.

7. Posting Judgments

- Complete, finalize and file judgments in accordance with the Electronic Judgement Protocol.
- Advise the public of judgments to be filed by posting on the Courts External website and by sending notice to subscribers.

8. Other Document Processing

- Prepare routine, complex or non-routine letters and memoranda referencing policies, rules and regulations and background information, while exercising discretion and judgment.
- As required, draft, collect, organize, and produce information to be used by the Justices in reports, presentations, papers, published works, articles and university course textbooks.
- As required, draft and prepare PowerPoint presentations in conjunction with speeches, conferences and seminars.
- Research information for speeches, bar admissions and marriage ceremonies.

9. Other Administrative Support

- Respond to inquiries from people inside and outside the Court exercising considerable judgment and tact at all times.
- Be familiar with advanced features of Corel WordPerfect, MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint and CAMS, and be willing to learn new technology and software as it is introduced.
- Update and maintain manuals, directives, statutes and any other court and administrative manuals used and retained by the Justices.
- Provide computer and technical support to the judiciary as requested.
- Ensure secure destruction of confidential documents.
- Maintain status of reserve judgment list and status of drafts. Ensure proper handling and storage of all material in accordance with applicable protocols.

10. Security

- Screen Justices' telephone calls and correspondence for security concerns and advise and liaise with security staff regarding security concerns with respect to the safety of the Justices, staff and all users of the services of the Court of Appeal.
- Keep up to date on all security procedures in place including warnings with respect to potentially violent persons, bomb threats, fire and other hazards that may be present in the workplace.

11. Perform Other Related Duties as Required

- Administer, assist and support training and provide technical direction to new Judicial Assistants of the Court.
- Maintain photocopiers in supply room and library and troubleshoot any arising problems.
- Order office supplies and keep an inventory to ensure timely replenishment of same.
- Coordinate, purchase and distribute periodicals for Justices.

SCOPE: List specific information that illustrates what internal or external areas the job impacts, and the diversity, complexity, and creativity of the job (see [Section 2.4](#)).

The decisions issued by the Court are released to the public shortly after filing. These decisions create law for the general public as precedents. The consequence of an error in a decision can impact the parties, public, government and the judicial system. In addition, due to the significant and substantive matters brought to the Court of Appeal, cost implications of an error in a decision could be substantial. Working to meet these requisite standards involves a high degree of initiative and attention to detail.

The position performs, coordinates and oversees varied and complex technical, executive and administrative duties in support of the Justices and the Court. Responsibilities require the exercise of independent judgment, and technical knowledge of the specific area of assignments and overall court activities. The position requires a high degree of work ethic. The incumbent is expected to perform their duties in a professional manner with a high degree of autonomy and diplomacy. Judicial Assistants provide services to the Justices working in both Edmonton and Calgary and must work with all Justices of the Court. This requires flexibility due to a wide variety of judicial styles.

The Judicial Assistants are responsible for identifying, analyzing, recommending and implementing new and improved systems to enhance their area of responsibility. The incumbent routinely interacts with a wide variety of senior people both inside and outside the Court. This requires a high level of maturity, independent judgment, initiative and problem-solving skills. This also requires the utmost diplomacy.

A key element of this position is the ability to work well under constant pressure and respond to work situations with minimal guidance or direction to ensure the operational and administrative needs of the Justices are met in a timely and professional manner. This requires the Judicial Assistants to draw from knowledge and past experience in resolving issues not clearly defined in established policies and procedures.

The Judicial Assistants are the link between the Justices, Court staff and stakeholders.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES: Provide a list of the most important knowledge factors, skills and abilities including knowledge about practical procedures, specialized techniques, etc.; analytical and conceptual skills and abilities; and skills needed for direct interaction with others not only diplomas and degrees. Specific training if it is an occupational certification/registration required for the job.

- Considerable working knowledge of court and government systems and processes, legislation and departmental and office policies, procedures and programs.
- In-depth working knowledge of legal procedures, legal terminology, case and statute citations.
- Considerable working knowledge of Rules of Court, legal forms and documents utilized within the court system.
- In-depth knowledge of jurisdictions, functions, procedures and services of the Court of Appeal of Alberta, the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta and the Provincial Court of Alberta.
- Know where to locate provisions of the *Criminal Code* governing publication bans and an understanding of the privacy protocols and various federal and provincial statutes and their application.
- In-depth knowledge of the mandatory provisions of the *Criminal Code* regarding the content of probation orders, conditional sentences and judicial interim release dispositions.
- Proficiency in the procedural aspects of criminal and civil appeals, court system policies and procedures, and office administrative practices.
- Excellent proofreading, grammar, editing and transcription skills, with utmost attention to detail.
- Knowledge of Sharepoint, the Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Publisher, One Note and Outlook), CAMS and 1GX.
- Ability to work well under pressure and with minimum supervision.
- Strong work ethic.

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- Considerable experience in providing executive support at a senior level.
- In-depth knowledge of business communication practices.
- Excellent organizational, time management, interpersonal, problem-solving and analytical skills.
- Ability to maintain a high degree of professionalism, discretion and tact. Exercise sound judgment in dealing with sensitive and confidential matters.
- Experience in organizing meetings and functions.
- Ability to perform specialized complex and difficult assignments with the use of independent judgment and proficiency.
- Ability to interpret and implement policies and procedures with respect to computer applications used by the Justices.
- Ability to analyze and resolve administrative and procedural problems and make recommendations to supervisor for consideration.
- Outstanding writing skills to compose draft protocols, reports, letters, and memoranda.
- Ability to organize workload, coordinate projects, set priorities, meet deadlines and follow up on assignments with a minimum of direction.
- Ability to communicate effectively and maintain strong relationships with the judiciary from various Courts, the Executive Director/Registrar, Court senior managers, co-workers, senior contacts from various professional, academic and government agencies.
- Knowledge of the methods and processes of the legal system.
- Ability to research and analyze law from common and unique law sources.
- Advanced skills in computer applications including word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation software.

CONTACTS: The main contacts of this position and the purpose of those contacts.

- Canadian Judicial Council – Justices’ involvement in various committees of the Canadian Judicial Council.
- Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs – Travel, conference and incidental claims.
- National Judicial Institute, Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice and Legal Education Society of Alberta – Various seminars and conferences.
- Members of the Judiciary – As previously stated throughout this document.
- Members of the Bar – Coordinating JDRs and acting as liaison.
- Universities and other Academic organizations – Outlining articling positions with the Court, coordinating speeches to various universities and organizations.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: List position numbers, class titles, and working titles of positions directly supervised.

CHANGES SINCE LAST CLASSIFICATION REVIEW: This section is not required to be completed if the job description is being written for the conversion to PREP. It should be completed for any subsequent classification requests under PREP.