

Junior Lawyers Division

Executive committee elections 2019

Guidance for candidates
September 2019

Introduction

This guide to the Junior Lawyers Division executive committee elections 2019 sets out the following information:

- General information about the JLD
- The executive committee positions explained
- Main tasks and responsibilities
- Current vacancies
- The election processes
- The timetable

Please note

If you are thinking of standing for the JLD executive, then it is important that you:

- Read the guidance notes as set out below.
- Read the FAQs which can be found at www.lawsociety.org.uk/juniorlawyers
- Note that there are separate guidance notes and nomination form for the student vacancy position at www.lawsociety.org.uk/juniorlawyers

1. About the Junior Lawyers Division

- (i) The Junior Lawyers Division (JLD) was launched in January 2008. It is a division of the Law Society of England and Wales, and as such is part of the formal representation structure for the profession. The JLD replaced the former national Trainee Solicitors Group (TSG) and Young Solicitors Group (YSG). The JLD membership consists of LPC Students, LPC graduates, trainee solicitors and solicitors up to 5 years and 364 days PQE.
- (ii) The aims of the division echo that of the Law Society, but it is solely in existence to support the junior members of the profession on issues which are unique to them or which impact on them. To this end, the division lobbies the Solicitors Regulation Authority as well as government on matters of interest to its members. It also provides support, advice, assistance and information to its members. You can find out more online at www.lawsociety.org.uk/juniorlawyers.

2. The executive committee roles explained

- (i) There are nine seats on the JLD executive committee as follows:
 - **Chair**
 - **Vice chair** (specially elected)
 - **Student representative** (specially elected)
 - **Six executive committee positions / 'free seats'** (areas of responsibility allocated following elections)
- (ii) In addition, the three JLD Law Society Council members are ex-officio members of the executive and as such attend all executive and national committee meetings.
- (iii) **Chair:** Chairs the executive and national committees, acts as the JLD's spokesperson and consequently is the person most often seen in the press. Time

commitment of the chair is high, being taken up with papers and article writing, co-ordinating other committee members' activities, attending events on behalf of the group, responding to enquiries, etc. Liaises closely with the Law Society staff and council members. This role will only be up for election if the vice chair is unable to move into the position, for whatever reason (see below). Therefore, this role is closed for nominations.

- (iv) **Vice chair:** Shadows the chair and the time commitment is therefore correspondingly high. The vice chair will be expected to head up the JLD policy positions and expected to write papers on behalf of the JLD e.g. consultation responses, policy briefings etc, as well as making regular contributions to the website on policy issues of the day. There are fewer events to attend which means less time out of the office, but the vice chair does need to be prepared to travel. S/he also needs to be able to work closely with the chair and may often take responsibility for specific projects. It is intended that the vice chair is the "chair in waiting" and will become the chair for the second year of their two-year seat.

Please note:

The vice chair role is an annual appointment. Each year the vice chair will automatically become chair. This means that the successful candidate for vice chair 2019-20 will become chair in November 2020. You must indicate specifically in your nomination that you wish to stand for the vice chair role. The election process is described more fully in point 5 below.

- (v) **Student seat:** The student seat will be up for election at the beginning of each academic year. This is a one-year post only, in order to ensure that a student member is able to initiate policy relating to student members (including solicitor apprentices), share specific concerns and deal with queries from student members. The position is intended for a current LPC student or recent LPC graduate who is working as a paralegal or actively seeking a training contract. They will have responsibility for student related issues (including solicitor apprentices) and are encouraged to be involved in the elements above.
- (vi) **Executive officer positions / free seats:** Candidates do not stand for specific positions on the executive committee. However, following the election tasks and responsibilities will be allocated. Standard matters which an executive member can expect to be involved in are as follows:
- Local group support
 - Membership issues
 - Policy – lobbying and consultations
 - Pro bono liaison
 - Publications
 - Careers information
 - Event organisation, for example, the annual conference and ball.
 - International liaison
 - Training issues
 - Writing articles
 - Event attendance

3. Main tasks and responsibilities – YOUR ROLE

- (i) As a member of the executive you will need to attend JLD meetings and events as follows:
- JLD executive and national committee meetings which are usually held in London at the Law Society's offices on a Saturday or Sunday approximately every six – ten weeks or so. If you miss three consecutive committee meetings you will be asked to step down and your seat will be reopened. Two meetings over the course of one weekend is considered as one meeting.
 - Two full weekend events (e.g. the JLD annual conference and ball, and the executive handover weekend). The executive handover weekend this year is scheduled for 9 & 10 November in Leeds.
 - The JLD also holds up to four free skills events each year for the different sectors of the JLD membership (i.e. LPC students, trainees and qualified solicitors with up to five years active PQE). All skills events will take place on a Saturday. Attendance at these events is mandatory if you have agreed to take responsibility for organising the event and/or you are allocated to the organising sub-committee. Even if you do not have responsibility for organising the particular event, you may wish to attend in order to provide assistance on the day and gain insight into the JLD's engagement work.
- (ii) You should ensure that you have the backing of your firm or organisation where applicable and that they are aware of the responsibilities that will ensue and the potential demands on your time. You will need to be accessible during working hours and be ready to deal with last minute duties that may arise from time to time, though ideally, responsibility for urgent matters will be shared amongst the executive officers.
- (iii) In addition to the weekend meetings, you can expect to work on JLD matters for possibly eight hours a week. This is an average over the course of a committee year, but please note that there will be peaks and troughs.
- (iv) Chair and vice chair positions:
- The time commitment will be double that of other members of the executive committee. The chair and vice chair can expect to work at least 15 - 20 hours a week on JLD matters. In addition, they will be required to attend additional meetings and events during their term (mainly in London); this will be in the region of 5 - 10 days a year. Please therefore ensure that your firm or organisation is agreeable to this and/or you are able to take annual leave to cover these commitments.
 - The email volume can be high at times. You will be expected to be up to date with issues affecting junior lawyers and legal changes and challenges so that you can respond quickly to membership and media enquiries. You will be expected to draft documentation including responses to consultation documents, so you need to allow time for research and drafting.

- These are demanding and challenging positions but also immensely rewarding. Do not undertake them unless you are prepared to give a high degree of commitment and understand that the level of commitment will last for two years, the second clearly being the busiest.
- (v) Being a member of the executive requires drive, commitment and the ability to communicate with the national committee and local groups. You will need to be able to persuade the committee of your views and to represent the JLD outside the committee to the legal community generally. This may be in the form of attendance at various social and formal events, as well as meeting directly in relation to JLD matters.
- (vi) You should keep yourself informed of the work of the JLD and the Law Society and current issues in general, particularly those affecting the JLD membership and the legal profession. You should be prepared to work constructively with other Law Society committee members, council members and staff and to perform an ambassadorial and advocacy role for the JLD.
- (vii) Most importantly you should not see your role in isolation; the executive work closely at every stage and you should be prepared to help with tasks not necessarily within your remit, whenever necessary. This may include approaching speakers when organising conferences or attending meetings to pursue JLD policy issues, as well as decision making within the executive as a whole.

4. Current vacancies

- (i) There are five vacancies on the executive committee – vice chair, three executive officer / 'free' seats, and student representative:
- **Vice chair** - Vice chair candidates can be elected to either the vice chair or a 'free' position. See point 5(vii) below. vice chair will become chair in 2020 following handover in November 2020. This is therefore a two-year seat.
 - **Three executive officer / free seats** - The three candidates with the most votes will be elected. Following the elections, the new executive will allocate tasks and responsibilities. All seats are for two years.
- (ii) The position of student representative is a one-year seat and is elected separately. Please visit the JLD website for further information – www.lawsociety.org.uk/juniorlawyers

5. The election processes

Nominations

- (i) In order to stand for an executive post anyone who falls within the scope of the JLD membership at the close of nominations (16 October 2019) is eligible. This includes:
- Solicitor apprentices
 - Legal Practice Course students and LPC graduates including those who are working as paralegals.
 - Trainee solicitors

- Solicitors with up to five years post qualification experience (e.g. a candidate must not have been admitted more than five years and 364 days as of 16 October 2019).
- (ii) Candidates will need to be nominated by two other members of the JLD (as set out at 5(i) above) and complete an election statement amounting to no more than **300 words maximum**, detailing:
- Your reasons for standing
 - Why you feel you would be the best candidate for the job
 - Relevant skills (e.g. communication, ability to get on with people etc)
 - Any prior relevant experience of organising events, working on committees, holding executive positions whether on a local JLD group or elsewhere.
 - What you think you can offer to the role and JLD members.
 - At least one policy that the JLD should take forward in the next year.
- (iii) **Vice chair position:** If you are standing for the position of vice chair please note the following:
- a) Additional information required.
- You will also need to complete the following questions in addition to the 300-word statement as mentioned above. You are allowed **250 words maximum per response**.
- What do you see as the role of the JLD?
 - Why are you standing for the role of vice chair (and therefore chair)?
 - What do you think you can bring to the role?
- b) JLD committee experience required
- Whilst any JLD member can stand for the position of vice chair, it is important that they have had prior JLD committee experience, either on the JLD executive committee or on a local JLD group, and that this experience is demonstrated in the election statement.
- (iv) Details of all nominations and election statements received will be copied and circulated to the current JLD national committee members and election candidates a week or so prior to the date of the results being announced.
- (v) Nominations can be withdrawn at any time although candidates should formally notify the Returning Officer, Yvonne Treacy of the Law Society (contact details can be found on the prescribed nomination form).

Voting

- (vi) Only the JLD national committee members are eligible to vote. The JLD national committee comprises the JLD executive committee and one representative from each local JLD group. Voting will be conducted by the Electoral Reform Services via a secure voting website with each national committee member being assigned a personal identification code. When voting they are able to select candidates in order of preference.

- (vii) There will be two voting processes:
- The first will be for vice chair. Only the candidates specifically nominated to this role will be included in this ballot. The national committee will vote for one of these candidates. The successful candidate will become vice chair for 2019 with a view to becoming chair in 2020. They will therefore be excluded from the second voting process.
 - The second voting process is for the three 'free seats'. The national committee will vote for the three candidates that they feel are most suitable (including vice chair candidates). Those with the most votes will be elected as executive committee members to serve a two-year term.

Results

- (viii) The results of the election process will be announced by email to candidates on 31 October 2019.
- (ix) All executive members (outgoing and newly elected incoming executive) are expected to attend the executive handover weekend. This year it will be held on the weekend of 9 & 10 November in Leeds. Accommodation is paid for by the JLD and travel expenses will be reimbursed.

6. The timetable

Action	Date
Deadline for submission of nomination form and election statement	16 October 2019 at 12pm
Voting period	24 October –30 October 2019
Announcement of results to candidates	31 October 2019
JLD executive handover weekend, Leeds	9 -10 November 2019

**Closing date for nominations is
Wednesday 16 October 2019 at 12pm**

If you have any questions or queries, please go online to www.lawsociety.org.uk/juniorlawyers or email juniorlawyers@lawsociety.org.uk