



Courts and Tribunals Fellowship Scheme

The IPT and the Judicial Office have established a Courts and Tribunals Fellowship Scheme for parliamentarians. This is fully supported by the judiciary of England and Wales.

What are the aims of the scheme?

The aims of the scheme are to enable parliamentarians to:

- deepen their understanding of the constitutional role of the judiciary and the **rule of law**;
- see first-hand the **impact** the law and legal system has on businesses;
- observe how **litigation is conducted** and how disputes are resolved;

Who is eligible to take part?

All members of the House of Commons and House of Lords. Certain key senior members of House staff may also be eligible to take part (*after consultation with their line manager*).

What does the scheme involve?

- **Visits** to a selection of courts and tribunals that in London, and in or close to your constituency that hear a range of different disputes
- Insight into the work of the courts and tribunals, and the **judges who preside** over them
- The opportunity to **compare and contrast** how different types of disputes are dealt with.

What can I expect in practice?

You will spend **three** days observing court proceedings, together with the opportunity to discuss the proceedings (in general terms) with the judge. Key case papers will be provided where possible.

Do I have to complete three consecutive days?

The visits do not need to be carried out consecutively; however, programmes that are completed within three months are likely to be more beneficial. Those arranging your visits will try to be as flexible as possible.

How long will each day be?

Court or tribunal proceedings usually take place between around 10.00 and 16.30, with an hour for lunch. You will be expected to arrive by 09.30 and finish in keeping with the court timetable or as you otherwise agree with your judicial host.

How will my visits be organised?

The IPT and the Judicial Office (based in the Royal Courts of Justice) will work with you to arrange your visit programme.

Can my visits under the Courts and Tribunals Fellowship Scheme count towards the award of a full IPT Fellowship?

Yes, if you continue and complete the full IPT 15-day programme within a related field or business sector, for example, visits to legal departments within companies or to legal companies specialising in business related issues.

What will happen at the end of my programme of visits?

If you finish or continue onto a full IPT Fellowship, you will become a Fellow of the IPT.



Example Visits

Please see below examples of different placements.

1 – *The Court of Appeal*

Court of Appeal (Criminal Division)

The Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) usually sits in six constitutions; as Monday is typically a reading day, only one or two courts sit. This Court has a criminal focus and receives a high number of sentence and conviction appeals from the Crown Court. Business-related appeals can include matters concerning health and safety, the environment and confiscation orders. Judges undertake a great deal of pre-reading and many judgments will be given *ex tempore*. You will receive the case summaries beforehand and, on the morning of the visit, you will discuss the day's work with the presiding Court of Appeal judge. A day (or half day until the luncheon adjournment at 1pm) will provide a good insight into matters such as sentencing policy.

2 – *A specialist court or tribunal in Central London*

Administrative Court/Planning Court

The Administrative Court deals with challenges to the decisions of central government, local councils, and other public authorities by way of judicial review. The more important cases in the Administrative Court are heard by two (sometimes three) judges in a Divisional Court. The Planning Court hears appeals from planning inspectors and judicial reviews relating to planning decisions. In both courts, an application which is refused on paper can be renewed orally before a judge. You could spend a day sitting with a judge hearing renewal applications, which would give a greater insight into the range of the Courts' work.

Commercial Court

The Commercial Court hears disputes involving shipping, insurance and banking; often these cases involve a non-UK party. On the morning of the visit, before sitting in on the trial, you will meet the judge for a general briefing on the day's proceedings. Alternatively, if attending on a Friday, you would see the judges conducting interim and case management hearings for forthcoming cases, therefore providing a slightly broader insight into the cases that come before the Court.

Technology and Construction Court (TCC)

This court is in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court. The TCC deals with disputes ranging from construction, engineering, specialist advisers (professional negligence claims), claims relating to property disrepair, and information technology.

Chancery Division (including the Companies Court)

There is a degree of overlap between the Commercial Court and Chancery Division, with the latter focusing on company and insolvency law. At the start of your visit, you will be briefed by the presiding judge and be able to discuss work of the Division generally.

Patents Court

This court is part of the Chancery Division of the High Court and specialises in claims concerning intellectual property and appeals relating to the registration of patents, designs and trademarks. The Court has a small number of specialist judges. The subject matter of many claims is highly technical, but, if a parliamentarian has a particular interest in this field, in some cases it may be suitable to see the work of this court.



Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT)

Typically, the EAT hears appeals from Employment Tribunals across the country. It can also hear decisions from the certification officer regarding trade unions and the Central Arbitration Committee. Over the course of a day, you will meet a judge of the EAT for a background briefing before observing proceedings.

Upper Tribunal (Tax and Chancery Chamber)

The Upper Tribunal (Tax and Chancery Chamber) has jurisdiction across the United Kingdom for tax cases. It hears appeals against decisions of the First-Tier Tribunal in Tax, Charity, and Land Registration cases. It also hears references against decisions of the Financial Conduct Authority, Prudential Regulation Authority and the Pensions Regulator. In some instances, the Chamber has the power to undertake judicial review, normally undertaken by the High Court's Administrative Court.

Competition Appeal Tribunal (CAT)

The CAT hears cases involving competition and regulatory issues. Appeals taken to this tribunal come from either the Competition and Markets Authority or the Secretary of State [for Business, Enterprise, Innovation and Skills]. Cases can involve mergers and market references; and the regulators for telecommunications, electricity, gas, water, railways and air traffic services. CAT cases are heard by a panel of three members the CAT will try to accommodate an interest in a particular sector of the economy.

3 – A local court or tribunal hearing close to your constituency

There are a District Registries of the High Court, Crown and County Courts and various Tribunal hearing centres across the UK. The most appropriate venue will be selected based on your interests. Cases could range from locally litigated business dispute in the High Court, to a health and safety prosecution in the Crown Court or administrative matters before the First-Tier Tribunal.

For more information about the Courts and Tribunals Fellowship Scheme please contact:

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