

Judicial Performance Evaluation

New Hampshire

Scope. Judicial performance evaluation began in 1987. Since 2001, trial judges, administrative judges, and marital masters have been evaluated every three years. Supreme Court evaluations began in 2008.

Commission. The Supreme Court created the Judicial Performance Advisory Committee in 2012 to make recommendations for strengthening the design and implementation of the JPE process. The committee consists of the Chief Justice of the Superior Court, the Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court, the chairs of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees, the executive director of the New Hampshire Public Defender, the executive director of the Judicial Council (or designee), the deputy attorney general and the chair of the New Hampshire Bar's Committee on Cooperation with the Courts (or designee).

Criteria. Survey questions regarding trial judges focus on such criteria as degree of preparedness, attentiveness, objectivity, legal knowledge, performance (including the ability to identify and analyze issues, and application of the law), judicial management skills (including making juror's role clear), and the thoroughness/timeliness of decisions.

Data collection. For Supreme Court justices, surveys are sent every three years to attorneys, litigants, law professors, and judges/marital masters. For trial judges, surveys are made available to attorneys, litigants, court staff, state/local agencies, and jurors.

Dissemination. For trial judges, individual results are shared only with the evaluated judge and the chief justice or administrative judge. For Supreme Court justices, only summary results for the court as a whole are made public. The Supreme Court compiles an annual report that includes summary JPE results for each level of court. The report is available to the public on the judicial branch website and provided to the governor and legislative leadership as required by state law.

Website. <http://www.courts.state.nh.us/sitewidelinks/evaluations.htm>