



NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE
INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA MAGISTRATURE



NJI JUDICIAL EDUCATION GUIDING OBJECTIVES

August, 2026



Educating with purpose

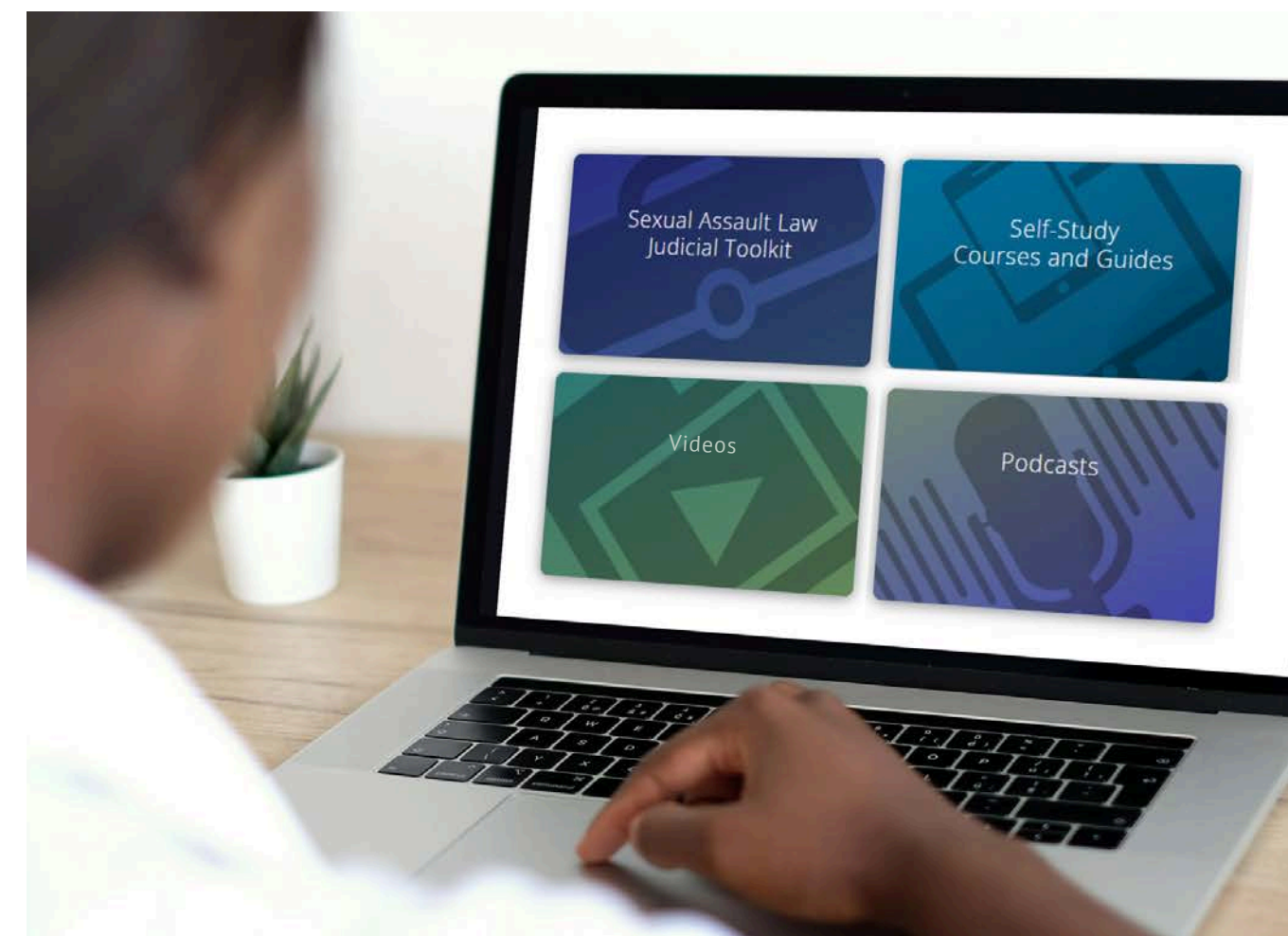


OUR MISSION

To build better justice through excellence in the continuing education of Canada's over 2,500 judges, at every stage of their careers.

The National Judicial Institute is Canada's leading provider of judicial education. A not-for-profit institution founded in 1988, we partner with judicial planning committees to deliver over 70 in-person education programs annually across all Canadian courts.

Beyond the classroom, judges have access to a full suite of NJI digital resources, including webinars, self-study courses, and podcasts available to them on demand.



OUR EDUCATION TOPICS

Canada's judges are lifelong learners. Through ongoing education, they stay at the forefront of an ever-evolving legal landscape, deepen their expertise and perspectives, and sharpen the skills that justice depends on.

NJI education provides a wide-ranging curriculum across these 3 core interrelated areas: judicial skills, substantive knowledge and contextual awareness.



OUR 9 GUIDING OBJECTIVES

The following 9 guiding objectives are the “north star” of continuing judicial education at the NJI - the skills and aptitudes that drive judicial excellence.

All of our programs and resources advance one or more of the guiding objectives.



POSSESS THE REQUIRED LEGAL KNOWLEDGE TO RESOLVE FACTUAL AND LEGAL QUESTIONS

- Possess an appropriate and up to date knowledge of relevant law and its underlying principles and procedure.
- Readily identify and recognize gaps in legal knowledge.
- When required to resolve legal and factual questions, are capable of finding and understanding additional legal information that is reliable and relevant.
- Demonstrate the ability and willingness to continually learn and develop legal knowledge.



RIGOROUSLY ASSIMILATE, CLARIFY, UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE FACTS AND ARGUMENTS

- Quickly absorb, recall and analyze information, facts and legal argument.
- Identify and focus on the real issues, and avoid irrelevant details or questions.
- Develop a clear understanding of the legal and factual questions and clarify uncertainty by asking appropriate questions to elicit additional information and explore relevant issues.
- Weigh evidence appropriately to decide the facts of a case.
- Properly apply legal rules and principles to the relevant facts.

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MAKE INCISIVE, FAIR AND LEGALLY SOUND JUDGMENTS

- Make timely and appropriate decisions.
- Reach clear, reasoned decisions objectively, based on relevant law and findings of fact.
- Justify decisions with sufficient, sound reasons.
- Exercise sound judgment and common sense, while being mindful of the effects of unconscious biases and prejudices.
- Demonstrate integrity and independence of mind.



UPLHOLD THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF ETHICAL AND IMPARTIAL CONDUCT

- Can articulate the fundamental ethical principles that govern judicial conduct.
- Demonstrate a commitment to ethical conduct in their actions.
- Identify and appropriately analyze ethically difficult situations.
- Recognize and deal appropriately with actual or potential conflicts of interest.
- Preserve the integrity of judicial independence and uphold the value of public justice without regard to outside influence, personal interests or extraneous considerations.

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PERFORM JUDICIAL RESPONSIBILITIES EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

- Undertake necessary preparatory work.
- Run trials, hearings, conferences and other proceedings effectively to facilitate a fair and efficient conclusion.
- Prioritize effectively and minimize delays and irrelevancies.
- Show the ability to work effectively at speed and under pressure.
- Deal effectively with case management and settlement conferencing.
- Develop and maintain proficiency with technology relevant to their judicial responsibilities.
- Motivate decisions with timely, sufficient reasons.



COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

- Establish authority and inspire respect and confidence.
- Listen attentively.
- Use plain language, orally and in writing.
- Adapt oral and written communications to be understood by the audience being addressed, notably when interacting with self-represented litigants and persons who face barriers to access.
- Show empathy, courtesy, respect and patience in interactions with court staff, counsel, parties, witnesses and members of the public.

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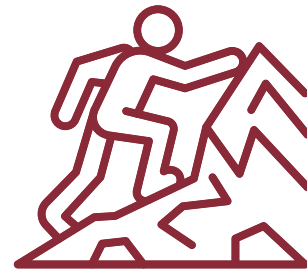
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WORK PRODUCTIVELY WITH JUDICIAL COLLEAGUES

- Support fellow members of the judiciary as colleagues, mentors, teachers, managers/coordinators and chief judges.
- Treat their colleagues with empathy, courtesy and respect.

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CULTIVATE THE APTITUDES AND THE CHARACTER TO OVERCOME PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES AND THRIVE IN THE JUDICIAL ROLE

- Demonstrate resilience and adaptability.
- Demonstrate the ability and willingness to continually learn and develop relevant technological and technical knowledge and proficiency.
- Care for their mental and physical health.
- Are open-minded, self-aware, and cognizant of their own perspectives and limitations.
- Are mindful of the effects of unconscious biases on their judgments.
- Demonstrate leadership.

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UNDERSTAND THE SURROUNDING WORLD

- Are interested in and attentive to social, cultural, political and economic developments in the community and the wider world.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* value of equality and recognize the value of multiple forms of human existence.
- Try cases fairly and impartially in a diverse society, considering the reasonable perspectives of differently situated persons.
- Give appropriate consideration to the consequences of social and cultural disparities and differences, where legally relevant.
- Recognize, identify and help litigants overcome access to justice barriers, within the limits of the judicial role.
- Are well-informed about the injustices suffered by Indigenous peoples in Canada, and understand how these injustices shape the lives of Indigenous peoples.
- Are committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, as notably set out in the *Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, and the *Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.



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NJI advances these guiding objectives throughout a comprehensive curriculum encompassing substantive law, judicial skills and social context education, forming a thorough and wide-ranging curriculum for all Canadian judges.

