



Minnesota Judicial Branch Policy

Policy Source: Minnesota Judicial Council
Policy Number: 400
Category: Human Resources and Development
Title: Education Policy
Effective Date: December 16, 2005; November 1, 2014; August 15, 2016; July 1, 2017; August 1, 2018; September 18, 2020, February 15, 2024
Revision Date(s): January 16, 2009; July 1, 2009; September 18, 2014; July 15, 2016; June 15, 2017; June 14, 2018; September 17, 2020; February 15, 2024

Supersedes:

Education Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Providing quality education opportunities for judges and employees is essential to ensure the fair, effective and efficient administration of justice and is a vital component in achieving the strategic plan and priorities of the Judicial Branch. Accordingly, the Judicial Branch is committed to the professional growth of its judges and employees and to the integration of individual skills and teamwork in support of its mission so that work is meaningful and best serves the citizens of the state.

It is the policy of the Judicial Branch to establish standards that ensure judicial officers and employees develop the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to meet the challenges of their work.

A. Education Standards for Judicial Officers

1. Requirements for Judicial Officers (Judges, Referees, Child Support Magistrates, and other Judicial Officers who are not contractors and who spend at least .5 FTE as a Judicial Officer)
 - a. All judicial officers are required to complete forty-five (45) hours of approved Continuing Judicial Education (CJE) coursework, three (3) of which must be diversity and inclusion related, every three years.

For an attorney who becomes a judicial officer, or a judicial officer who returns to law practice, hours earned under the rules previously applicable to the judge or judicial officer (i.e. CLE or CJE) shall be recognized by the

appropriate accrediting and reporting agency (i.e. State Board of Continuing Legal Education or the Human Resources and Development Division (HRD)).

Judicial officers are required to complete certain prescribed coursework. Credits earned in attendance at programs listed below apply to the 45-hour judicial education requirement for a current reporting period.

New judges, within their first year on the bench, are required to complete HRD's orientation program for new judges or a comparable HRD-approved course. Child support magistrates are not required to complete the Human Resources and Development Division's orientation program for new judges. Referees may complete HRD's orientation program at the discretion of their respective Chief Judge.

All district court judges are required to tour one HRD-approved institution to which they sentence/commit individuals during each full term of office and all referees are required to tour an HRD-approved institution to which they sentence/commit individuals once every six years.

b. Curriculum Standards

All coursework offered in satisfaction of the mandatory requirements contained herein must be approved by HRD.

Accreditation will be governed by the following:

Judicial education should address the areas of judicial competence, performance, case management, opinion writing, diversity and administration.

Judicial education programs should impart knowledge; improve skills and techniques; and increase the understanding of judges regarding their roles and responsibilities in the court system, and their impact on the judicial process, the people involved and society.

On-demand courses shall be presented in a high-quality manner permitting participants to hear all of the audio and see all of the video portions of the program, including presentations, audience questions, responses to questions, embedded videos, and other program materials.

The approval for an on-demand course is valid for 24 months after the date the course was made available.

c. Accreditation for Teaching

When a judge covered by these rules teaches an accredited course, such instruction may be accredited at the rate of one (1) credit for each hour of instruction and up to two times the presentation time for preparation. A judge may claim up to fifteen (15) hours for teaching in any one reporting period.

d. Failure to Satisfy Requirements

In individual cases, HRD may grant waivers or extensions of the minimum education or reporting requirements. If a judge fails to complete the minimum education or reporting requirements, the HRD Director shall report such failure to the Chief Judge or Chief Justice for appropriate disposition.

2. Requirements for Senior Judges

a. Senior judges are required to complete and report annually fifteen (15) hours of approved CJE or CLE coursework, one (1) of which must be diversity and inclusion related. Senior judges are not required to attend the institution tours. Senior judges are required to report annually on a fiscal year basis.

b. Accreditation for Teaching

When a judge covered by these rules teaches an accredited course, such instruction may be accredited at the rate of one (1) credit for each hour of instruction and up to two times the presentation time for preparation. A senior judge may claim up to five (5) hours for teaching in any one reporting period.

c. Before being assigned to serve, a senior judge is required to be current in completing and reporting his/her continuing education requirements. In individual cases, HRD may grant waivers or extensions of the minimum education or reporting requirements.

B. Education Standards for Judicial Branch Employees

1. Requirements for Judicial Branch Employees

- a. All full time Judicial Branch employees are required to complete a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of approved course work each fiscal year, coinciding with the performance review focal point evaluation date, one (1) of which must be diversity and inclusion related. Employees employed less than one year will have their hours prorated from the date of hire.
- b. Part-time employees are required to comply with the standard by prorating the hourly requirement consistent with their FTE. Intermittent employees, as defined in the Judicial Branch Human Resource Rules, are required to comply with the standards by developing an annual education plan with their immediate supervisor.
- c. Curriculum Standards

All education and training should address employee development or improving employee skill. Court-related education and training programs should impart knowledge and understanding of the judiciary, the legal process or the employee's role in the judicial process.

Courses taken to satisfy licensure continuing education requirements for professionals, such as court interpreters, auditors, attorneys and psychologists count towards satisfaction of this policy's requirements.

To accommodate a variety of learning styles, court-related education and training programs may include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Judicial Branch orientation;
- 2) On-line/eLearning;
- 3) Court sponsored activities such as workshops, courses and conferences;
- 4) Attendance at seminars for court personnel;
- 5) Advanced and specialized programs, if available and appropriate;
- 6) Participant-initiated activities such as academic coursework, in-service workshops, attending workshops or conferences of other organizations.

All coursework offered in satisfaction of the mandatory requirements contained herein must be approved by the employee's supervisor.

Each hour of class or course work will equal one (1) credit and may be reduced for field trips and other less formally structured course activities.

d. Credit for Teaching

When an employee covered by these rules teaches a course or provides on-the-job training, such instruction may be credited at the rate of one (1) credit for each hour of instruction. Such instruction may also include up to two times the presentation time for preparation. On-the-job training shall be accredited at the rate of one (1) credit for each hour of instruction and does not include credit for preparation. An employee may claim up to five (5) hours for teaching in any one fiscal year, coinciding with the performance review focal point evaluation date.

e. Failure to Satisfy Requirements

Managers will review and verify if education requirements are met and include as part of the annual performance evaluation.

II. IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY

Implementation of this policy shall be the responsibility of the State Court Administrator acting as the Judicial Council's agent.

III. EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS

Not applicable