



SINGAPORE JUDICIAL COLLEGE
SJC's Journey
2024

Message from the Chief Justice

– In these dynamic times, the “Learned Judge” must evolve into the “Learning Judge” if we are to deliver justice not just in a moment but over a lifetime, and not just in individual courtrooms but as a whole justice system. –

When I took office as Chief Justice more than 12 years ago, one of my early aspirations was to establish and entrench a culture of continuing judicial education in our Judiciary. In 2015, I decided that the time was right to establish a central body – the Singapore Judicial College – which would have overall charge of that endeavour, and it set about centralising, institutionalising and enhancing the various judicial education programmes that had been developed in the Tri-Courts.

In the 10 years since its inception, the SJC has developed the Judicial Competency Framework that is now in its second iteration, rolled-out a suite of foundational programmes that all new judges attend as part of their preparation for the Bench, introduced a specialist Master of Laws in Judicial Studies in partnership with the Singapore Management University, established a portfolio of Empirical Judicial Research, and forged partnerships with judicial education institutions from a range of common law and civil law jurisdictions. As we mark this significant milestone in the SJC’s history, we can look back at the road travelled and be proud that we have journeyed well.

Looking ahead, the need for judicial education will only continue to grow. The traditional assumption – that great judges are appointed, not trained – no longer holds true in our rapidly and often unpredictably changing world. Disputes are becoming increasingly complex, and the ways in which the public engages with the courts have vastly changed. And the judicial role has itself evolved: while adjudication remains a core part of judicial work, our broader mission – the fair and efficient administration of justice – now requires us to embrace multiple roles as systems reformers, leaders and learners.

In these dynamic times, the “Learned Judge” must evolve into the “Learning Judge” if we are to deliver justice not just in a moment but over a lifetime, and not just in individual courtrooms but as a whole justice system. As the SJC enters its second decade, my wish for the SJC to be an internationally renowned institution of higher judicial learning has remained constant, though the scope and emphasis of this vision has evolved over time. As we look ahead, the SJC’s vital mission is not just the delivery of excellent judicial education programmes, but the cultivation of a community of excellent judicial learners – judges who are curious, adaptable, self-directed and proactive in seeking out opportunities to develop new perspectives, hone existing skills and acquire new skills that enhance their ability to discharge both their adjudicative and their systemic functions.

We have much to celebrate and more to look forward to. As the SJC embarks on the next chapter of its journey, I am confident that it will continue to play a pivotal role in ensuring that our people and institutions are well-equipped to meet the challenges of our time, and to advance the fair administration of justice in Singapore – and, indeed, in the region and beyond. I thank you all for being an important part of this continuing judicial education journey.

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon
Supreme Court, Republic of Singapore

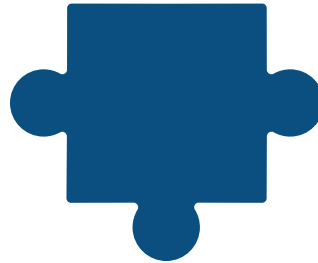


SJC's Vision, Mission and Values



OUR VISION

To be a world-class institute that nurtures and inspires judicial excellence through future-focused judicial education and research



OUR MISSION

To build inclusive and engaged communities of lifelong learners and educators, foster curiosity, leverage innovative pedagogical approaches and technology, and empower and equip forward-thinking Learning Judges



Courting Holistic Excellence for Singapore's Learning Judges

THE ROAD TRAVELLED 2024

In 2024 the Singapore Judicial College (SJC) focused its efforts on five key areas: building capabilities and resources, strengthening programme offerings, embracing innovative instructional pedagogy, thought leadership and research, and international collaboration and engagement.

These initiatives lay the groundwork for Learning Judges to embrace their roles as Adjudicators, System Reformers, Leaders and Learners.

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“(J)udges cannot stop learning. The world in which we live does not stand still, and so, nor can we.”

—

Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon,
Opening Remarks,
Judicial Education Townhalls 2024

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Building capabilities and resources

The year saw a renewal of SJC's leadership with the appointment of Dean Natalie Skead, Executive Director Justin Yeo, and Deputy Executive Director Paul Chan. As the team presses forward in pursuit of new horizons, it registers its gratitude to immediate past Executive Director Paul Quan for his guidance and the strong foundation he built during his leadership.

This new team spearheaded a reorganisation of SJC's structure, establishing two closely related divisions: the Institute of Judicial Excellence for education and the Institute of Judicial Studies for research. To further enhance its teaching capacity, SJC expanded its faculty, drawing from the Supreme Court Bench, Judicial Service Officers and subject matter experts.

Strengthening programme offerings

SJC rolled out a revised and augmented Judicial Competency Framework (JCF), comprising 14 competencies, and developed contextualised learning pathways for different career phases.



SJC rolled out an augmented JCF that offers structured guidance for Learning Judges.

Programme offerings were enhanced across all categories, with revamped structured foundational 101 programmes and the introduction of advanced courses. Notable examples of the latter included an intermediate 201 programme for Judgment Writing as well as a 301 train-the-trainer Judgment Writing workshop.

Additionally, the initiation of a Tech Futures series incorporating a mix of formal lectures and interactive hands-on activities illustrated how guided play can be used to spark curiosity and overcome barriers in adult learning.

SJC also rolled out specialist elective programmes to cater to the learning needs of each of the Tri-Courts and provide a scaffolded approach to building adjudicative and systemic competencies

These programmes included the Family Justice Courts Learning Week focussing on Therapeutic Justice in adjudication, State Courts Training Days comprising a broad spectrum of learning topics relating to civil, criminal, tribunal and community law, and a structured Learning Day programme for the Supreme Court Registry.



The FJC Learning Week focused on Therapeutic Justice in adjudication.

Programme Evaluation Feedback

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It was helpful thinking about the opportunities that arose in the context of different critical uncertainties. I also thought the framework on the assessment of risk and considering how different items have different risk appetite is useful.

*Participant,
Supreme Court Registry Learning Days
24 - 25 September 2024*

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The whole 5 days was (an) intense but ... rewarding learning experience, especially the role play (segment on) judicial interview.

*Participant,
FJC Learning Week
1 - 5 July 2024*

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The State Courts Specialist Session on Criminal Law, Evidence and Criminal Procedure.

To reinforce its programme development, delivery and feedback processes, SJC instituted a multi-faceted curriculum review procedure.

At a policy level, the priorities articulated by the JCF for judicial learning across the three phases of a judicial career are identified in consultation with the SJC Board of Governors, which includes the Tri-Courts leadership.

At a programmatic level, expert subject matter and faculty input is sought through four Subject Matter Advisory Panels (Crime, Civil, Family and Judgecraft). These panels review the learning objectives, instructional design and content of SJC’s structured training programmes for relevance and rigour.

SJC also set up multiple channels to gather input from judicial officers on their learning needs and feedback on SJC programmes. These included structured programme evaluations at pre-determined intervals throughout a programme, feedback loops and needs gathering initiatives, surveys on scheduling preferences and a standing feedback channel for qualitative feedback and suggestions. This holistic approach of continuous feedback and review enables SJC to remain adaptable and responsive to learning needs

Embracing innovative instructional pedagogies

In 2024, SJC experimented with and implemented a host of novel teaching methods, incorporating experiential, peer, and blended learning approaches to create engaging educational experiences. These included fishbowl discussions, role plays, guided play, conversation circles and design thinking workshops.



All Hands on Tech: Learning to appreciate technology through guided play.

SJC also leaned into the use of coaching and mentoring to encourage learner-led enquiry and self-directed learning. SJC further explored the use of technology, including generative AI, in creating instructional materials and facilitating discussions.

Thought leadership and research

SJC's Executive Director Justin Yeo delivered a presentation at the Inaugural Singapore-India Conference on Technology titled "Use of AI In Judicial Education – What Is & What If", which showcased SJC's use of AI in its development of instructional materials for its learning programmes



The SJC delegation participated in knowledge sharing at IOJT 2024 through a presentation and panel discussions.

In November 2024, Dean Natalie Skead and Executive Director Justin Yeo presented a paper entitled "Judicial Education in a Brave New World" at the International Organization for Judicial Training's 11th International Conference on Training of the Judiciary, held in the Republic of Korea. Deputy Executive Director Paul Chan, Director Anita Parkash and District Judge and Former Executive Director, Paul Quan participated in panel discussions at the Conference.

SJC's Dean Natalie Skead is part of a research team involved in a national study on judges' work and psychological health in Australia, a topic not previously well understood. The preliminary findings from the study were published in a seminal report entitled "Preliminary findings from a large-scale national study measuring judicial officers' psychological reactions to their work and workplace".

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In our “WHAT IS”, we use AI to surmount manpower constraints, to make learning interesting, and to create safe spaces for discussions. In our “WHAT IF”, we push boundaries courageously but cautiously; for now, we seek to create on-demand, asynchronous and personalised AI-driven learning. These help us to nurture and inspire Learning Judges, who serve the ends of justice and achieve the Singapore Judiciary's Vision: to be a trustworthy judiciary that is – and very importantly – ready for tomorrow.

*Executive Director Justin Yeo,
“Use of AI In Judicial Education
– What Is & What If”.*

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International collaboration and engagement

SJC's efforts to engage with international counterparts in 2024 included study exchanges with judicial education institutes such as France's Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature, New Zealand's Te Kura Institute of Judicial Studies and the National Judges College of Australia. Separately, SJC also hosted knowledge exchange forums with delegations from Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei, China, France, India.



Participants at the Masterclass Programme for Commercial Judges in Asia.



In September 2024, working with Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon and five curator judges, the SJC organised and ran a historic Masterclass Programme for Commercial Judges in Asia, hosted in Indonesia. Targeted at superior court commercial law judges, the four-day programme comprised an intensive curriculum on five key areas of commercial law and provided a platform for in-person interaction among its participants.



Building knowledge while fostering camaraderie at the Masterclass Programme for Commercial Judges in Asia.

SJC also made substantive contributions by leading a discussion on the use of courtroom technology and running a successful design thinking workshop.

THE ROAD AHEAD (2025)

Building on the momentum of 2024, SJC has outlined an ambitious roadmap for 2025.

Key initiatives include:

- Enhancing programme offerings, such as an expanded Judicial Mentoring Programme, new 201 courses on Deliberative Decision-Making and Judicial Leadership, as well as a refreshed Judicial Executive Programme (for international judges).
- Building adjacent skills in a new “Appreciating Allied Areas” programme with a focus on statistics and forensics.
- Creating structured Learning Pathways comprising curated content mapped to competencies and calibrated to career phases. Delivered digitally to provide on-demand learning opportunities.
- Expanding research activities and output in areas such as online courts, judicial wellbeing and judicial education.
- Strengthening international collaborations, including serving as an anchor partner to the Judicial Roundtable on the Future of Justice planned for 2026.

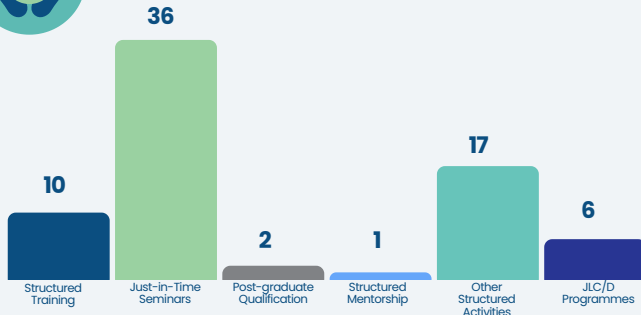
SJC’s achievements in 2024 and its ambitious plans and diverse initiatives for the future underscore its commitment to becoming a world-class institute that nurtures and inspires judicial excellence through future-focused judicial education and research by building inclusive and engaged communities of lifelong learners and educators, fostering curiosity, leveraging innovative pedagogical approaches and technology, and empowering and equipping forward-thinking Learning Judges.

SJC FITNESS TRACKER

SJC's journey in data sets.
Period: 1 January to 31 December 2024



Number of Programmes



All 14 JCF competencies have been covered in the programmes in 2024

Resources Developed

- Sexual Offences Resource Page on Learning Judge Portal
- E-learning resources on Learn.Gov.SG
- Learning guides with pre-reads



Average Evaluation Score

	Mean	Median	Mode
Judgement Writing 101	4.7	5	5
Assessing Credibility 101	4.5	5	5
Effective Engagement of Self-Represented Persons 101	4.3	4	4
Advanced Coaching Clinic	4.6	5	5
Facilitation, Coaching & Mentoring for Effective Judgment Writing	3.9	4	5
Case Management 101	4.5	5	5
Courtroom Communication 101	4.2	4	5
Judicial Perspectives 101	4.4	4	5



Teaching Delivered by



SJC Senior Faculty/
Faculty/
Convenors



External
Local
Speakers

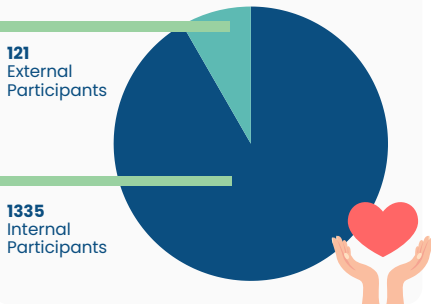


International
Speakers

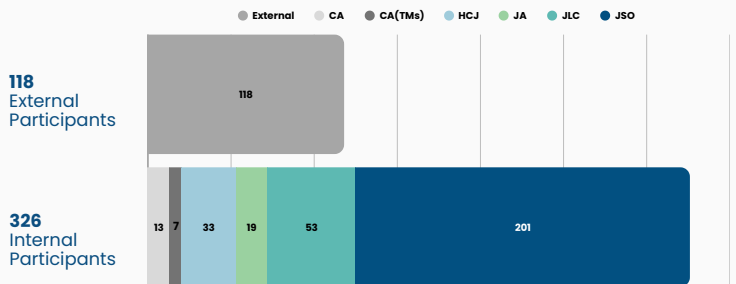


Court
Administrators

Attendees



Unique Participants: Internal and External



International Collaborations





www.judiciary.gov.sg/singapore-judicial-college