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Training of Judges

Pursuant to section 74 of the Estonian Courts Act, a judge is required to develop knowledge and skills of his or her speciality on a regular basis and to participate in training.

According to the Courts Act, one of the judges' self governmental bodies - the **Judicial Training Council** - is responsible for the training of judges. In addition to judges, it is comprised of representatives of the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Justice and the University of Tartu. The members of the Judicial Training Council who are judges are elected by the Court *en banc* (largest Estonian judicial representative body, comprised of all Estonian judges). The Supreme Court's **Legal Information and Judicial Training Department** provides support services to the Judicial Training Council and organizes training.

The aim of training of judges is to improve and update their professional knowledge and skills. Training of judges is based on the **strategies for training of judges** and **annual training programs**. The Legal Information and Judicial Training Department of the Supreme Court shall submit the training program for the next year to the Training Council.

The training needs and results of the assessment of the effect of the training are taken into account when preparing training programs. For assessing the training needs and the effects of the training, all available sources of information about the court system are applied. Those sources are, above all, communication with judges and court officials, also with other persons and institutions which have contacts within courts, feedback on trainings, case law analyses, questionnaires, researches etc.

Judges' training includes mostly legal training and skills training. Legal training is divided into training for civil judges, criminal judges and administrative law judges. If judges are interested, they can participate in trainings of other areas as well. The annual training plan sets out the subjects of the trainings, the lecturers and the duration of the trainings. Lecturers are acknowledged specialists from Estonia and from abroad.

Primarily, the judges are trained. Additionally, candidates for judicial office, law clerks and consultants of courts can attend judges' trainings. If there are openings, also officials of the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Chancellor of Justice and the Chancellery of the Estonian Parliament may participate in judges' trainings.

The training calendar, schedule, materials, information about trainings abroad and other information is available on the website (in Estonian) of judicial training [1]. Only registered users can access the entire material on the website. Judges can register online for the coming year's training already in October and November.

Judges can also participate in trainings abroad. International cooperation happens through the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), where the Supreme Court is a full member. Every year the EJTN compiles a catalogue of trainings organised in the member states. The catalogue is published on the website

of the EJTN. Furthermore, every year the EJTN carries out an exchange program of judges. The EJTN also develops the judicial language learning system and makes proposals for the improvement of the judicial training system, and promotes distance learning methods and prepares guidelines for the the judicial training institutions of the European Union.

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[1] <https://koolitus.riigikohus.ee/>