

# Judicial Committees

## Rules

The Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Court of Justice provides for Rules of Court to be made by the President in consultation with five Judges of the Court. The first set of Rules, in both the Original and Appellate Jurisdictions of the Court, were made in 2005. Since then, a Rules Committee has been established every two years to advise on amendments to the Rules. Substantial amendments were made and published in April 2017.

These 2017 amendments largely reflected the Court's adoption of the Curia suite of software products. Curia is a cloud-based electronic court management system comprising three main applications: an e-filing portal used by attorneys, an electronic case management system used by registry staff and judges to view and process cases filed, and a reporting tool used to generate data and provide performance measurement statistics.

A re-constituted Rules Committee has recently been formed and it is anticipated that significant updates to the 2017 Rules will be made in 2019 and published. Areas that will attract attention include the regime for the taxation of costs as well as the filing fees structure. These aspects of the Rules have remained unchanged since 2005 when the Court's operations commenced.

To maintain balance with the Court's overarching strategic goal, the Rules Committee will focus on a range of matters including:

- a) Increasing accessibility of its services to litigants by identifying any barriers to justice in the Court's process and services,
- b) Establishing mechanisms to eliminate such barriers,
- c) Providing for on-going monitoring and evaluation of cases and case management processes,
- d) Increasing the Court's operational efficiency,
- e) Increasing the Court's outreach to stakeholders across the region.

The CCJ's Rules Committee is chaired by the Honourable Mr. Justice Wit and includes: the Honourable Mr. Justice Barrow; the Registrar and Chief Marshal, Ms. Jacqueline Graham; the Deputy Registrar and Marshal, Ms. Meisha-Ann Kelly; Registry Supervisor, Mr. Nandlal Hardial and Judicial Assistant, Ms. Latoya McDowald. The committee pays tribute to the Right Honourable Sir Dennis Byron, former President of the CCJ, for his vision, innovation, creativity and foresight. His guidance has advanced the services and benefits the Court provides to its customers and stakeholders.

## Website

A special committee on the CCJ website was convened whose remit was to ensure that the website is credible, user-friendly and useful so that the redesign of ccj.org would be seamlessly implemented. To this end, a demonstration website was created and is being refined in order to meet the current requirements of user experience and aesthetics. In order to carry out its remit, the committee was expected to:

- Obtain feedback from the judges and staff and suggest changes to the developer

- Recommend additional page design layouts or changes to existing designs,
- Review and make recommendations on information architecture,
- Note non-compliance issues for the developer to resolve.

The committee is engaging with the website developer and users so that all aspects of its remit will be considered before the redesign is implemented in early 2019.

## Judicial Committees Continued

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# Judicial Assistants & Interns

One of our Judicial Assistants, Ms. Kerine Dobson, left the Court after the end of her three-year term, in July 2018 and Ms. Kavita Deochan, a well-qualified graduate of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill and the Hugh Wooding Law School, joined the Court on 2 July 2018. This leaves the Court with a complement of four Judicial Assistants: three are allocated to pairings of judges and one Judicial Assistant to the new President. The Hon. Mr. Justice Saunders will be reviewing his needs, and those of the Court, to determine the appropriate level of judicial support.

From 21 May 2018 to 20 July 2018, six law students spent three weeks each as unpaid interns with the Court, during the vacation period between their first and second years of studying for their Legal Education Certificate at the Hugh Wooding and Norman Manley Law Schools. Each of the interns was selected by the respective Principals of the Law Schools. The interns followed a programme which saw them learning about, and assisting in, the work of the various units of the Court and this principally included shadowing and assisting Judicial Assistants in their work.

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## Health & Safety

In keeping with the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 of Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean Court of Justice has a safety committee with primary responsibility to “keep under review the measures taken to ensure the safety and health of persons at the place of work”.

Since its inception, the Health and Safety Committee has consistently sought to develop and maintain an objective policy of employing a ‘whole organisation’ approach by the inclusion of a wide cross-section of members of staff in the formulation and implementation of policies. This approach, it is hoped, will be beneficial in securing greater buy-in which should ensure greater adherence to practices that encourage the health, safety and wellbeing of all users of the Court.

To ensure efficacy of function, the committee continuously engages the review and renewal of policies and practices to maintain alignment with contemporary best practices. More recently, the Court’s Emergency Procedures were revised based on trending weather patterns associated with global warming. This initiative is supported by the training of staff to fill the roles of Wardens and Marshals in the event of emergencies, upgrade of signage to guide users in emergencies and the use of audio-visual presentations when hosting events.

In addition, the Committee, in conjunction with the Court’s Facilities Unit, continues to work closely with regulators to ensure the court’s buildings are compliant with the relevant building codes and accreditations.

## Judicial Committees Continued

### Fun at Work



The Information Systems Unit took the top prize in the office decorating competition.



Pictures of the judges and employees formed the tree which was the focal point of the entry to the Public Education and Communication's Unit and the Registrar's Office.

The name of the committee was changed from the Social Events Committee during this period to better reflect its mandate of identifying, organizing, and planning activities that enhance camaraderie in the workplace. The first major initiative of the Committee was a trio of activities during the Christmas period. These included a tree-lighting event, office decorating competition, named Pump Up Your Office, and a Christmas party. It was noted that these events increased fellowship among our judges and employees, fostered a harmonious working environment and encouraged teamwork (and fierce competition) among employees.

The Committee also started the process of establishing a birthday club for the judges and employees of the Court. As one of the ways to build leadership capabilities in the organisation, the Fun At Work Committee rotates chairmanship among its members. During the period, Ms. Sue-Lan Chin and Mr. Darren Shah served as heads of the Committee. The other members include: Ms. Collette Brown, Mr. Leon Gittens, Mr. Oriel Herrera, Mr. Christopher Hoyte, Ms. Simone Jackson, Mr. Ronnie Joseph and Ms. Candace Simmons.



Ms. Debra Gibbs, Executive Assistant, places her personalized Christmas ornament on the tree.