

The Supreme Court Of Ireland

(a) Judicial functions:

The Supreme Court exercises a general jurisdiction as a court of final instance in respect of all matters other than appeals from courts of trial by jury in criminal cases. In certain circumstances the Court of Criminal Appeal may refer a point of law of public importance, which has arisen in an appeal from a criminal trial, to the Supreme Court. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court extends to all matters of civil and administrative law.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court exercises in a substantial way the role of a constitutional court as the court of final instance in constitutional issues including issues concerning the constitutionality of legislative measures.

(b) Consultative/Advisory Functions:

The Supreme Court does not have any consultative or advisory functions. However, where primary legislation has been adopted by the Houses of the Oireachtas (parliament) the President may, before promulgating the measure as law, refer such measure or specified provisions of it to the Supreme Court in order to determine whether the relevant provisions are compatible with the Constitution. The opinion of the Court is binding. Should the measure or any provisions of it be found to be unconstitutional the measure does not become law. Otherwise, the President promulgates the legislation as law.

- (c) In principle cases may only be brought before the Supreme Court on appeal on questions of law. The average number of cases dealt with by the Supreme Court per annum is 250 approximately.