

SCREENING AND SELECTION

POLICY DIRECTIVE: “Selection shall be based on the principles of merit, fairness and equity.”

Fairness, merit and equity are fundamental principles by which we build and sustain our Nova Scotia Public Service workforce.

The Civil Service Act states that (Section 14) "Appointments and promotions to fill vacancies in the Civil Service shall be based on merit principles and the Commission shall use selection processes designed to establish the merit of candidates." The Act further clarifies: (Section 19) "...the matters to be considered in determining merit may include education, skills, knowledge, experience, years of employment in the public service, personal attributes and any other matters deemed by the Commission necessary or desirable having regard to the nature of the duties to be performed."

In a merit-based public service, people including members of designated groups, are selected on the basis of their competence, through processes that are accessible, transparent and impartial. In essence, an offer of employment is made on the basis of merit when the candidate meets the qualifications of the position and the process used to determine merit was fair.

Equity speaks to the principle of "representedness". Our goal is to be a public service that is representative of the populations we serve, particularly by members of the designated groups (Aboriginal People, Persons with Disabilities, African Nova Scotians and Other Racially Visible Persons and Women in occupations or positions where they are under-represented).

Employment equity has two components:

- It concerns fair treatment and the removal of barriers, and
- It relates to the correction of past imbalances through the implementation of special measures to accelerate the achievement of a representative workforce.

The deputy head of a department may establish and apply any operational requirement or organizational need in order to find the ideal (qualified) candidate for the organization. This means that Departments can identify representedness or employment equity goals as an bona fide organizational need. When employment equity goals are established as an organizational need are a consideration in the selection process.

The key is that there is a link to the quantitative goals in the employment equity plan of the Department.

The following guidelines should be followed in the selection process:

1. Non-Bargaining Unit Positions - (or competitions where no qualified bargaining unit member has made application for a bargaining unit position)

a) Screening Applicants

In the process of screening applicants, employment equity is factored into the assessment process after other essential screening criteria have been met. Applicants who meet the required (essential) qualifications for a position and who have identified as a member of a designated group will be eligible for an interview or further testing in the selection process.

Example: A competition has 30 applicants. Screening has identified 10 applicants with the essential qualifications for the position. One of the qualified applicants has self-identified as a member of a designated group. The department is under-represented and has established goals to improve the representativeness of their department. The qualified designated group applicant is one of the applicants chosen for an interview.

b) Selection

When the top candidates scores are within 10 % and the Department is under-represented, the selection panel can recommend the candidate who self-identified as a member of a designated group.

Example: Five candidates have been interviewed for an “excluded” position. Two candidates have excelled in the determination of relative merit through the interview, testing and reference checking process. The second ranked candidate is a member of a designated group. The score difference is 2%. The department is under-represented and has established goals to improve the representation of designated groups. The position can be offered to the designated group candidate.

2. Bargaining Unit Positions

Section 15 of the Civil Service Act states, "Notwithstanding Section 14, appointments and promotions to fill vacancies in the Civil Service in positions that are covered by a collective agreement shall be made in accordance with the collective agreement."

a) Screening Applicants

When screening for bargaining unit positions, bargaining unit members are screened first, in order to determine if there are qualified bargaining unit applicants for the position. If it is determined that there are no qualified bargaining unit applicants then screening can proceed to consider non-bargaining unit applicants.

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have been met. Applicants who meet the required (essential) qualifications for a position and who have identified as a member of a designated group will be eligible for an interview or further testing in the selection process.

Example: Twenty individuals have made application for a bargaining unit position. Of these, 10 of the applicants are members of the bargaining unit. Upon screening these 10 applicants it is determined that they all have the necessary qualifications for the position. One of the qualified bargaining unit applicants has self-identified as a member of a designated group. The department is under-represented and has established goals to improve the representativeness of their department. The qualified designated group applicant is one of the applicants chosen for an interview or further testing in the selection process.

b) Selection

If there is a 5% spread or less between the top scores in a competition, length of service becomes the determining factor for identifying the top-ranked candidate. If length of service is equal, position should be awarded to a candidate who has self-identified as a member of a designated group. Anything over 5% but less than 10% in the top candidates scores, length of service and representation from designated groups should be taken into consideration.

Example: Five bargaining unit candidates have been interviewed for a position and two candidates have achieved acceptable ratings in the determination of relative merit through the interview, testing and reference checking process. The second-ranked candidate is a member of a designated group. The score difference between the top two candidates is 5%. The department is under-represented and has established goals to improve the representation of designated groups. The number one and number two-ranked candidates have equal length of service - the position can be offered to the designated group candidate.