

3.2 Excluded Classification (EC) Step Increase Policy

Policy Statement

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to providing employees compensated under the Excluded Classification (EC) Pay Plan the opportunity to move through their salary ranges as they gain experience in their positions.

Definitions

COMPA-RATIO

An employee's base pay rate expressed as a percentage of the control point (100%) of the salary range.

CIVIL SERVANT

An employee of the Government of Nova Scotia whose terms and conditions of employment are set out in accordance with the *Civil Service Act* and regulations.

DEPARTMENT

Any department, office, or public service entity established by the Government of Nova Scotia, as identified under Category I in Appendix I-A of the Corporate Administrative Policy Manuals Policy.

DEPUTY HEAD

The deputy of the member of the Executive Council presiding over a department and all others whom the Governor in Council from time to time designates as having the status of deputy head.

EMPLOYEE

An employee paid according to the EC Pay Plan.

LATERAL TRANSFER

An employee moves from one EC position to another with the same EC pay level.

PROMOTION

An employee moves to an EC position with a higher classification and pay range maximum than the employee's immediate position.

RED CIRCLE

A form of salary protection where an employee is placed or reclassified in a position with a lower pay range maximum and where their former pay rate is frozen for such time as the Public Service Commission deems appropriate.

STEP INCREASE

A step increase provides an employee the opportunity to move through their salary range as they gain experience in their job. When an employee meets the eligibility requirements, they can move through their salary range by up to 3 compa-ratios each April 1 until they reach the salary range maximum.

Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to provide information on the administration and eligibility requirements for step increases for employees paid under the EC Pay Plan.

Application

This policy applies to employees paid according to the EC Pay Plan and whose terms and conditions of employment are set out in accordance with the *Civil Service Act* and regulations.

Policy Directives

QUALIFYING PERIOD

The qualifying period used to determine an employee's eligibility for step increases is April 1 to March 31 of the previous fiscal year.

ELIGIBILITY

Step increases will be applied, effective April 1 of a given year. An employees is eligible for a step increase if they meet the following criteria:

- have worked for a minimum of six months with pay as an EC employee between April 1 and March 31 of the previous fiscal year (the qualifying period);
- are working as an EC employee on April 1st in the new fiscal year during which the step increase will be paid; and
- have not yet reached the salary range maximum for their position.

Step increases provide the opportunity for employees to move through their salary range as they gain experience in their jobs. While not tied to performance, a step increase is not intended to reward those employees with documented performance issues. A step increase will be withheld, upon the recommendation of an employee's deputy head, in situations where performance issues have been documented.

SHORT TERM ILLNESS, LONG TERM DISABILITY & WORKERS COMPENSATION BOARD LEAVE

An employee on Short Term Illness (STI) leave continues to draw a salary from the Province so time on STI will count toward the qualifying period for step increases. An employee on STI leave as of April 1 of the new fiscal year will be eligible to receive a step increase provided all other eligibility criteria are met.

Employees on STI Exhausted status, Long Term Disability or Workers Compensation Board leave are not eligible for a step increase as they are not working and are not drawing a salary from the Province. For employees gradually returning to work, ease back time will count during the step increase qualifying period. However, to receive a step increase, these employees must be working on April 1 of the new fiscal year during which the increase will be paid. Employees on ease back on April 1 are still deemed to be disabled and therefore not eligible for a step increase.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF PAYMENT

A step increase that results in an increase to base pay (compa-ratio) is paid bi-weekly to employees effective April 1 of the fiscal year immediately following the qualifying period.

PROMOTION - AFTER OCTOBER 1

An employee promoted after October 1 to an EC position with a higher classification/ pay range is eligible for a step increase based on their rate in the new position, provided all other eligibility criteria are met.

In this situation, the size of the step increase may be reduced if both the employee's immediate and next level managers are in agreement and it is approved by the appropriate Public Service Commission Compensation Consultant.

DEMOTION

An employee who is demoted, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to a lower-level EC position during a qualifying period (previous fiscal year), may be eligible for a step increase effective the following April 1, provided the eligibility criteria are satisfied and no issues related to poor performance have been documented.

LATERAL TRANSFER

An employee who moves from one EC position to another at an equivalent EC pay level during the qualifying period (previous fiscal year) and remains in their new position on April 1 is eligible for a step increase based on their pay rate in their new position.

RED CIRCLE

An employee whose current rate of pay has been red circled and is therefore being paid at or above the maximum pay rate for their position is ineligible for a step increase.

LEAVING THE CIVIL SERVICE PRIOR TO STEP INCREASE PAYMENT

A civil servant paid according to the EC Pay Plan who leaves the Civil Service prior to a step increase being paid, and who otherwise satisfies the eligibility criteria for a step increase, will receive the step increase prorated from April 1 of the payment year to the date of their departure.

PRIOR APPOINTMENT

A former non-Civil Service appointment may be used to assess an employee's eligibility for a step increase if:

- the former appointment was not as a civil servant but the employee was paid according to the EC Pay Plan;
- the previous appointment was on a full-time basis in the same or similar position with the same department;
- the appointment was during the relevant step increase qualifying period;
- the Civil Service appointment commenced the next working day after the non-Civil Service appointment had ended; and
- there was no resulting employee compa-ratio change between the former and the Civil Service appointment.

No retroactive payments will be paid prior to the fiscal year immediately following the employee's Civil Service appointment.

TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT

If an employee is temporarily reclassified during the qualifying period to an EC position with a higher pay range, and remains in that position on April 1, the employee is eligible for a step increase based on their temporary rate of pay, provided all step increase eligibility criteria are satisfied. When the employee returns to their regular position, their regular rate of pay will be adjusted to reflect any step increases paid to the employee during the term of the temporary reclassification.

The application of step increases during and following completion of a temporary assignment will be contingent on the employee not having already reached the maximum of their pay range at the time the step increase is to be applied.

SECONDMENT

Secondment within the Civil Service

An employee seconded within the Nova Scotia Civil Service and who remains in a position covered by the EC Pay Plan through their secondment is eligible for step increases in accordance with the requirements set out in this policy.

Secondment outside the Civil Service

An employee seconded outside the Civil Service who continues to be paid by the Province under the EC Pay Plan is eligible to receive step increases consistent with the terms and conditions of this policy during the term of their secondment.

An employee seconded outside the Civil Service who is not being paid according to the EC Pay Plan is eligible to receive step increases paid during the term of their secondment upon their return to their EC position within the Civil Service. Those adjustments would be made according to this policy and the current EC Pay Plan, and not any salary increases received while with the external employer. There will be no retroactivity paid by the Province for the time at the external employer.

For a secondment outside the Civil Service, the employee must be able to demonstrate that their performance has been assessed during the secondment period in a manner consistent with the Government of Nova Scotia's Performance Management Policy before a step increase is paid.

PREGNANCY, PARENTAL OR ADOPTION LEAVE

Employees who do not meet the step increase eligibility criteria because of time not worked during the qualifying period due to pregnancy, parental or adoption leave(s) are deemed to be eligible for step increases.

This section does not prevent an employee on a pregnancy, parental or adoption leave from being ineligible for a step increase for reasons related to performance during the qualifying period.

Guidelines / Procedures

The Public Service Commission Compensation Unit may develop guidelines and procedures to assist with the application and administration of this policy.

Accountability

DEPUTY HEADS

Deputy Heads are responsible for:

- ensuring that step increases are administered in accordance with this policy and any guidelines or procedures developed by the Public Service Commission
- advising the Public Service Commission of any situations where step increases should be withheld due to performance issues
- ensuring that step increase expenditures are managed within approved departmental budgets.

MANAGERS

Managers are responsible for:

- in consultation with their Human Resource Business Partners, assessing each employee's eligibility for a step increase according to the eligibility requirements set out in this policy
- assessing employee performance in accordance with the Performance Management Policy.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The Public Service Commission is responsible for:

- raising awareness among managers and employees about the objectives and administration of this policy
- reviewing step increase eligibility for employees in accordance with the directives set out in this policy
- maintaining step increase and any supporting performance management information within each employee's personnel file
- conducting annual compensation planning for step increases
- reviewing and updating this policy and any supporting guidelines or procedures as necessary to ensure ongoing effectiveness.

Monitoring

The Public Service Commission will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and consistent application of this policy.

References

Civil Service Act and General Civil Service Regulations
Performance Management Policy and Guidelines
Excluded Classification (EC) Pay Plan

Enquiries

Compensation Unit
Public Service Commission
Email: psccompensationinquiries@novascotia.ca

Approval date: **February 17, 2011**
Approved by: **Executive Council**

Effective date: **February 17, 2011**
Administrative update: **January 21, 2021**
