

## **SECTION 3**

### **RECRUITMENT AND STAFFING**

#### **3.07 USE OF EQUIVALENCY QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS IN THE STAFFING OF GOVERNMENT POSITIONS**

**AUTHORITY:** CIVIL SERVICE ACT

**ADMINISTRATION:** P.E.I. PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.01 The purpose of this policy is to outline the process used when considering equivalencies in lieu of stated formal qualifications.

## **2. APPLICATION**

- 2.01 This policy applies to all employees who are responsible for or involved in the screening and selection process for all unionized and excluded positions within the civil service and excluded positions in Health PEI on behalf of the Government of Prince Edward Island.

## **3. POLICY**

- 3.01 Demonstrated equivalencies will be considered in lieu of the stated formal qualifications in most competitions, and applicants who meet either the established formal qualification or the accepted equivalency will be considered equally.

## **4. PROCEDURES**

- 4.01 All job descriptions (position questionnaires) have a section listing the education and experience required to perform the duties of the position. These qualifications are used as the education and experience requirement statements on job ads when vacant positions are posted for competition.

- 4.02 Notwithstanding 4.01, the qualification statement on job ads for all unionized and excluded positions within the civil service and excluded positions in Health PEI will allow for demonstrated equivalent education and experience in lieu of the stated formal qualifications, except for qualifications for regulated professions. Decisions regarding the qualifications for regulated professions will be left to their respective licensing body.

- 4.03 On rare occasions, the position's home department may feel that the more formal qualification approach is required with no allowance for equivalent education and experience. After discussions between the department and

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the Public Service Commission, the PSC will determine which approach is appropriate for the particular position.

- 4.04 Job postings (except for those regulated professions) shall be advertised with the following language included in the qualification statement: "Demonstrated equivalencies will be considered." It is the responsibility of the applicant to fully demonstrate on their application how they meet the requirements of the position.
- 4.05 When screening applications in a competition, the list of commonly used equivalencies will be used to determine qualified candidates.
  - (a) If an applicant presents with a good background not on the list of commonly used equivalencies, a discussion between classification, staffing, HR Manager and the departmental manager will determine if the applicant should be screened as qualified.
  - (b) This list of commonly used equivalencies can be updated by the Public Service Commission as experience with the use of equivalencies increases and other equivalency scenarios are validated.
  - (c) Staffing Consultants shall participate in the screening of all positions where individuals with equivalent qualifications are applicants.
  - (d) When an applicant's qualifications are accepted as equivalent, they shall be rated in the interview process as having met the education and experience requirements of the position.
  - (e) It is important to note that an applicant's equivalencies are evaluated for each position they apply for, and are granted based on the skills and abilities required to perform the duties of that particular position. The individual may be granted an equivalency for one

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position and not another.

- (f) Supporting documentation shall be kept in the competition file and on the PeopleSoft system.
- 4.06. Following screening, the final decision about the best qualified applicant for the position takes place during the interview, testing and referencing phase of the selection process.

## **5. ATTACHMENTS**

### **5.01 Frequently Asked Questions**

## **ATTACHMENT 5.01**

### **Frequently Asked Questions UPSE Civil Equivalency Implementation in the Staffing Process**

#### **Q1-What is Equivalency?**

A1-Qualification statements tend to ask for traditional models of formal education (e.g. degree or diploma) along with certain work experiences. In some competitions, applicants with all the required experiences are screened out as candidates because they do not meet the 'exact' educational requirements for the position as stated on the job posting. Equivalency is determined by the selection board of a competition through an examination of the applicant's education, training and experience in lieu of the stated formal education. Any education, training or experience deemed equivalent must be recent and relevant. Applicants who meet either the established formal qualification or the accepted equivalency will be considered equally.

#### **Q2-Most job ads have a minimum requirement for both formal education and experience. How is equivalent experience counted?**

A2-Years of experience used toward the formal education equivalency are not double counted. The years of experience that are used to attain equivalency for education are used solely for the education requirement and won't be counted again toward the experience requirement. So, equivalent candidates will need sufficient related experience so they can meet both the educational and experiential requirements of the job.

#### **Q3-Who determines whether an applicant is equivalent?**

A3-The selection board for the competition is responsible for determining equivalency. The board will document acceptable equivalencies for applicants that do not meet the formal education requirements and will determine whether each of these candidates is equivalent.

#### **Q4-How does equivalency work for someone who has applied for different competitions?**

A4-Unless the Minimum Qualifications for each of the competitions are exactly the same, each person is considered on their own merit for each competition. So, even though someone may have been considered equivalent for a prior competition, if that same person applies to a different competition then that person would need to be reexamined. Someone may be considered equivalent for one particular competition but may not be considered equivalent for another different competition.

**Q5-What if someone has been deemed equivalent for a competition and then applies for that same kind of competition at a later date?**

A5-The Public Service Commission will have a system in place to track when a person has been deemed equivalent and for which competition. If that person applies again for the same competition, the PSC will be able to track whether they were screened in as equivalent in the past. That said, applicants should also indicate on their application/resume if they have been screened in as equivalent in previous competitions for the same role.

**Q6-What responsibilities do applicants have with respect to equivalency?**

A6-As with all competitions, applicants are responsible in their application, resume and cover letter to clearly indicate how they meet or exceed the Minimum Requirements posted in the ad. This is the information used to screen applicants into or out of competitions. If an applicant is not clear or doesn't demonstrate how they meet all of the requirements in an ad, it is likely that they will be screened out of the competition. With equivalency, applicants need to demonstrate in their application and/or resume how their education, training and experience is equivalent to the formal education requirements posted in the ad. Applicants who believe their experience is equivalent to formal education requirements should indicate as such on their application/resume.

**Q7-Are any of the staffing processes changed as a result of implementing equivalency?**

A7-Staffing processes will remain the same, although there will be additional requirement for board discussion and documentation for equivalencies in each competition. If an applicant's qualifications are deemed equivalent to the posted Minimum Requirements, they will be processed in the same manner as candidates who possess the minimum qualifications as stated on the job posting. Once a pool of applicants is selected for a job interview they will all compete and be ranked on the basis of their qualifications, relative ability, knowledge and skills.

**Q8-When will the equivalency process be used for PEI Government competitions?**

A8-Actually the equivalency process has been used for excluded competitions both in the Civil Service and in Health PEI since December 2011.

**Q9-Which competitions will use the equivalency process?**

A9-Most all positions in the civil service will be using the equivalency process. For legislated professions (such as nurse, engineer, lawyer, social worker, etc.), any determination regarding equivalencies shall be made by the licensing body.

## **Q10-What are some examples of what could be considered as equivalent?**

A10-This list is not comprehensive, also each competition's assessment of equivalencies will be specific to the role that is being advertised and **equivalencies must be recent and related**. Here are some examples of how equivalencies could be considered:

Degree level equivalencies:

- Diploma with significant directly related experience;
- Degree in another area with either directly related experience or directly related course work at the post-secondary level;
- Diploma with a degree in progress, one of which is in a related area;
- No Bachelor level degree but a related Master's level degree in progress; and
- Related RCMP/military training at executive/senior officer level.

Diploma level equivalencies:

- Diploma in another area with course work in specific area;
- Diploma in another area with directly related experience; and
- Degree or part degree in a related area.

Again, this is not a definitive list of equivalencies. Applications for competitions to be considered as equivalent and that fall outside this listing will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **Q11-How will I know if a competition is using equivalency process or not?**

A11-Look for language in the ad under Minimum Qualifications stating, "*Demonstrated equivalencies will be considered.*