

# Survey of Staffing (Cycle 6, 2013)

## Glossary

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**360-degree feedback:** A form of assessment involving ratings of the strengths and weaknesses of an individual by colleagues working at the same level, employees reporting to that person, and individuals who that person reports to.

**Acting appointment:** The temporary appointment of an employee to another position, if the appointment on a term or indeterminate basis would have constituted a promotion.

**Advertised staffing process:** An appointment process where persons in the area of selection are informed of and can apply to an appointment opportunity.

**Alternative dispute resolution:** An informal mediated approach to resolving conflicts between parties in order to reduce the need to resort to formal grievance or appeal processes; in this case, those disputes regarding staffing procedures or outcomes.

**Appointment:** An action taken to confer a position or set of duties on a person. Appointments to and within the public service made pursuant to the *Public Service Employment Act* are based on merit and non-partisanship..

**Area of selection:** The area of selection refers to the geographic, occupational, organizational and/or employment equity criteria that persons must meet in order to be eligible for an appointment process.

**Assignment:** The temporary movement of an employee at level within an organization to perform a set of duties or functions of another existing position or to take on a special project

**Assessment centre:** An assessment method involving multiple assessment tools and activities, such as work-sample tests, group discussions and simulations, in which candidate performance is observed and rated by a team of assessors.

**Asset qualifications:** Qualifications, other than official language requirements, that are not essential to perform the work, but that would benefit the organization or enhance the work to be performed currently or in the future.

**Bridging program:** This mechanism enables the appointment of students without competition from outside the public service (upon referral from the Public Service Commission) or by including them in a closed competition, provided they are still employed by an organization as a Federal Student Work Experience Program or CO-OP student and are included in the area of selection for the closed competition.

**Candidate Achievement Record:** A tool that typically assesses 3-4 key leadership competencies through self-reported examples of past performance and work-related achievements.

**Casual employment:** A short-term employment option to hire a person. Under the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), a casual worker cannot work more than 90

working days in one calendar year in a given organization.

**Chair of an assessment board:** The person who co-ordinates the activities of an assessment board. They may or may not be involved in making the final selection decision.

**Cognitive ability test:** A standardized employment test which examines general reasoning abilities. Usually a multiple-choice test, administered on paper or electronically.

**Collective staffing process:** A collective staffing process is defined here as a process intended to provide qualified candidates for more than one hiring manager, or more than one work unit or location. This also includes processes intended to serve multiple departments or agencies.

**Consulting position:** A position held by a professional who provides advice or services in a particular area of expertise. This person is self-employed or works for a consulting firm.

**Deployment:** The movement of a person from one position to another in accordance with Part 3 of the *Public Service Employment Act*. A deployment does not constitute an appointment. It cannot be a promotion and cannot change the tenure of employment from specified term to indeterminate. A person who is deployed is no longer the incumbent of their previous position.

**Development program:** Program for developing employees via a series of rotations or placements. Usually employees in these programs will get a promotion within a set amount of time (e.g. EC-1 to EC-2 after a year).

**Employment status:** The nature of an employee's contractual relationship with an employer (casual, consulting, term, indeterminate, etc.).

**Federal Public Service:** Includes all those departments, agencies, commissions, boards, etc., that are governed under the *Public Service Employment Act*. This does not include separate employers such as the Canada Revenue Agency, the Canada Food Inspection Agency, Parks Canada, the Canadian Forces or the non-civilian side of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

**Hiring manager:** For the purposes of this survey, this is the manager or supervisor who is trying to fill one or more positions in their own work unit.

**Human resources plan:** The human resources plan identifies an organization's current and future human resources needs and the objectives and strategies planned to meet these needs.

**In-basket:** An assessment technique that simulates the important aspects of a management position. The candidate must respond to managerial issues and problems that are presented in the form of documents such as e-mails from superiors, peers and subordinates; organizational reports; letters from stakeholders as well as messages and other correspondence that have accumulated in the manager's "in-basket."

**Incumbent-based promotion:** A promotion, within the Research and University Teaching groups where a career progression framework has been established, as defined in section 2 of the *Public Service Employment Regulations*. Incumbents are promoted by appointment to a higher level in their own positions based upon the incumbents' qualifications.

**Independent agency affiliated with an organization:** Some smaller agencies can become independent from a larger organization, but continue to share services with the original organization, such as human resources and information technology support.

**Indeterminate appointment:** Appointment to a position for no fixed duration, whether part-time, full-time or seasonal.

**Informal discussion:** The opportunity for a person eliminated from consideration in an internal appointment process to discuss the decision informally before an appointment is made.

**Informal meeting with the hiring manager:** In some cases, the hiring manager may meet informally with the candidates to discuss their areas of expertise or job interests, primarily for purposes of placing them appropriately rather than making a hiring decision per se.

**Internal appointment process:** A process for making one or more appointments in which only persons employed in the public service may be considered.

**Locale (other than the National Capital Region (NCR)):** The area of selection can be confined to a specific "locale", such as a 50km radius of Toronto or Regina, or the NCR. This is distinct from a geographic area of selection such as "west of the great lakes", or "the Atlantic region".

**Manager or supervisor:** In this survey, a manager or a supervisor is someone who has employees reporting to him/her. This can also include various position titles such as "director", "assistant director", "unit head", "team leader", etc. No delegated staffing authority is required to be considered as a "manager or supervisor" for this survey.

**Member of an assessment board:** Person who participates in the assessment of candidates to the process, for example by asking questions during a structured interview, or rating candidate responses to a behavioural exercise.

**Merit criteria:** For the purpose of determining merit for appointments made pursuant to the *Public Service Employment Act*, the four types of criteria are essential qualifications, asset qualifications, organizational needs and operational requirements.

**Non-advertised staffing process:** A staffing process that does not meet the criteria for an advertised staffing process.

**Operational requirements:** A merit criterion that relates to current or future requirements of the organization for the proper functioning of the work unit or the organization (such as work done on weekends, travel, shift work).

**Organization:** In Public Service Commission publications, the term "organization" refers to federal government departments and agencies subject to all or part of the *Public Service Employment Act*. It is used to refer to the entire organization, and not just your immediate work unit.

**Organizational needs:** A merit criterion relating to current or future needs that could enhance the way in which the organization operates or fulfills its mandate. Organizational needs could include the consideration of employment equity designated group members.

**Political activity:** As defined by Part 7 of the *Public Service Employment Act*, political activity means carrying on any activity in support of, within or in opposition to a political party; carrying on any activity in support of or in opposition to a candidate before or during an election period; or seeking nomination as or being a candidate in a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal election before or during the election period.

**Pool:** Group of people who have met some or all of the essential qualifications set out for an advertised staffing process.

**Priority entitlement:** The right to be appointed to a position ahead of all other persons if the essential qualifications are met. The *Public Service Employment Act* stipulates three types of statutory priorities and six regulatory priorities in accordance with the *Public Service Employment Regulations*.

**PSEA:** The *Public Service Employment Act* that came into full effect on December 31, 2005.

**Reclassification:** A change in either the occupational group and/or level of the position as a result of a classification decision. This can happen on an individual basis, or for multiple employees belonging to the same group and level.

**Secondment:** The temporary move of an employee to another organization in the core public administration (Schedule I and IV of the *Financial Administration Act*), and other organizations for which the Treasury Board is the employer to perform the functions of a position that already exists or to take on a special project. A secondment cannot result in a promotion or extend an employment period.

**Simulation exercise:** Assessment exercises in which the candidate's behaviour and/or reasoning is assessed with written and/or oral tasks that simulate the actual job context. These are standardized tests and are distinct from hypothetical questions that may arise in interviews.

**Situational Judgement Test:** Assesses judgement required for solving problems in work-related situations. This typically involves a multiple-choice format where the test-taker chooses from several possible actions to deal with the problem described.

**Specified term appointment:** Appointment of a fixed duration, whether full-time or part-time.

**Staffing activities:** Staffing activities refer to appointments to the public service as well as promotions, lateral and downward movements and acting appointments within the public service. Staffing activities within the public service include all appointments and/or deployments of employees within or between departments or agencies that are

subject to the PSEA, including SERLO processes.

**Staffing Advisor:** Member of the PE group who provides staffing advice to managers.

**Structured interview:** An interview following a fixed set of questions in a fixed order, usually involving a panel of interviewers.

**Testing Accommodations:** A change in the test time limits, testing environment, conditions, or mode of presentation, which permits a person with a disability to take an employment test without placing that person at a disadvantage.

**Total elapsed time:** The time between when a manager completed the staffing request form until the appointee first reported for his or her new position, or the process was otherwise concluded.

**Work unit:** A group of people who have the same objective or who work on the same project and come into regular contact.

**Work sample:** A standardized test used in employee selection to assess an individual's ability to perform the tasks associated with a particular job, such as typing or programming skills.

**Written Narrative Assessment:** A written description of how the person being considered for a position meets the merit criteria. It provides concrete behavioural examples and must be signed by a manager who is familiar with the work of the person.

**Written rationale:** The written rationale for a non-advertised process demonstrates how the choice meets the organizational criteria for use of non-advertised processes, the organization's human resources plan and the staffing values.