

The act authorizes the commission to delegate to deputy heads any of its powers, except those relating to appeals and inquiries. The commission has delegated powers to make appointments in operational and administrative support categories; employing departments are required to use Canada employment centres as their recruitment agency for appointments from outside the public service. Appointing authority has been delegated in the administrative and foreign service, technical, and scientific and professional categories under conditions which preserve the commission's authority as central recruiting agency for the public service of Canada with a few exceptions, that is, those cases where a department is virtually the sole employer of a particular occupational specialty. The commission ensures that appointments made under delegated authority comply with the law and commission policies.

The Public Service Commission is guardian of the merit principle, ensuring that high standards are maintained in the service, consistent with adequate representation of the two official language groups, a bilingual capability to the extent prescribed by the government, equal employment and career development opportunities irrespective of sex, race, national origin, colour, age, marital status or religion, and encouragement of opportunities for the disadvantaged.

Every citizen may apply for positions. Competitive examinations are announced through the news media and posters displayed on public notice boards of major post offices, Canada employment centres, Public Service Commission offices and elsewhere.

One of the paramount responsibilities of the Public Service Commission relates to staffing in accordance with the merit principle. In recognition of affinity of work and for administrative reasons, public service positions have been aggregated in six broad occupational categories: executive, scientific and professional, technical, administrative and foreign service, administrative support, and operational. The classification system divides these categories into a host of occupational groups, in which positions are similar in skills required and the work performed.

Appointments to public service positions are normally made from within the service, except when it may be in the best interests of the service to do otherwise. In an internal selection process, prospective candidates may be identified through an employee inventory, or may respond to a notice posted to advertise the position. The successful candidate is chosen by a selection board which examines all the candidates. Unsuccessful candidates may appeal the results of the competition. The Public Service Commission maintains an employee inventory for positions at senior management and senior executive levels.

Under other circumstances it may be decided to transfer employees between positions. In exceptional instances an employee may be promoted without competition; other public servants have the right to appeal such a staffing action. A right to appeal also exists when a decision has been taken to recommend an employee's demotion or release because of incompetence or incapacity.

The Public Service Commission offers interdepartmental courses in government administration, occupational training and management improvement. The commission acts as the consultant and adviser to deputy heads, and training and development facilities are made available to train employees for specific occupations or for promotion in administrative and managerial ranks.

In order that departments may serve the public in accordance with the Official Languages Act, the commission ensures that employees appointed are qualified to meet the linguistic requirements of positions and, in situations where they do not qualify, that incumbents or winners of competitions for bilingual positions receive training in their second official language. Part-time language training is also available to other public servants.

The commission has specific responsibilities in language training, research and the development of selection standards for the linguistic requirements of positions and groups of positions within the federal public service. It must establish both the method of assessing language knowledge and the degree of language knowledge or proficiency of candidates.

Appropriate selection standards are formulated from the decisions of deputy heads based on the linguistic requirements of positions and groups of positions.