

A new Official Languages Act came into force on September 15, 1988. This legislation gives effect to the official languages guarantees of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Act assigns to the Treasury Board responsibility for the general direction and co-ordination of the policies and programs of the Government of Canada, in all federal institutions other than Parliament, relating to service to the public in the official language of its choice as well as to language of work and the participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians in those institutions.

The Board is also responsible for the formulation, implementation and review of all policies on information management. This covers the management of information technology, including all aspects of information systems, electronic data processing, telecommunications and office support systems. It is also responsible for information management practices, including those relating to Access to Information and Privacy, information collection, security of information and other assets, records management, communications, and the Federal Identity Program.

The Board has issued a policy to test innovative ways to deliver government services and achieve better value for money, including the most efficient organization approach and comparison with private sector alternative sources of supply.

Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission of Canada is an independent agency accountable to Parliament for the administration of the Public Service Employment Act. Under this Act, the Commission must ensure that the merit principle is upheld in all public service appointments. It must also guarantee 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 race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted.

The Public Service Employment Act gives the Commission the exclusive right and authority to make appointments to and from within the public service. It also 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; however, departments are

required to use Canada employment centres as their recruitment agency for appointments from outside the public service in the operational and administrative support categories. Appointing authority has also 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.

In recognition of affinity of work and for administrative reasons, public service positions have been aggregated in six broad occupational categories: management, 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.

Competitions for positions in the public service are announced through the news media and posters displayed on public notice boards of Canada Employment Centres, Public Service Commission of Canada offices, major post offices and other selected locations.

The Commission establishes boards to decide on appeals against appointments made within the public service and against release or