



# Hiring Manager's Guide to Talent Acquisition

IN THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA



## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

RESPECT ACCOUNTABILITY INTEGRITY EXCELLENCE

Alberta

Proudly working together to build a stronger province for current and future generations

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION – HIRE FOR THE FUTURE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>STAFFING PRINCIPLES</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>ROLES &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>STEP 1: PLANNING (STRATEGIC STAFFING PLAN)</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>STEP 2: STAFFING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>STEP 3: CANDIDATE SOURCING</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>STEP 4: CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>STEP 5: CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT - INTERVIEWS</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>STEP 6: CANDIDATE SELECTION</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>STEP 7: PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>STEP 8: MAKING THE OFFER AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>STEP 9: ORIENTING NEW EMPLOYEES</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>STEP 10: EVALUATING THE TALENT ACQUISITION PROCESS</b> .....	<b>30</b>



## TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

[Staffing Principles](#)

[Competition Process Chart](#)

[Strategic Staffing Plan Conversation Tool](#)

[Staffing in the APS: Appointment Methods and Recruitment Strategies](#)

[Competency Profile](#)

[Minimum Recruitment Standards](#)

[APS Competency Model](#)

[Competency Questionnaire](#)

[Interview Plan and Assessment Summary](#)

[Assessment Rating Scales](#)

[Reference Check Form](#)

[New Employee Orientation Site](#)

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## INTRODUCTION – HIRE FOR THE FUTURE

Attracting, recruiting and selecting top talent underpins our ability to achieve our workforce of the future and reach our full potential.

In line with our Vision and Values, the Alberta Public Service (APS) Competency Model identifies and defines the behavioural competencies that are important for successful performance as the APS moves into the future.

**Competencies have been integrated throughout our talent acquisition practices to enhance our ability to uncover the right talent, for the right role, at the right time.** *Can they do the work? Will they do the work? Will they fit?*

- It's a strategic approach; hiring talent that benefits the APS as a whole, considering current and future business needs.
- It supports effectiveness and efficiency - information identified in upfront conversations flows through to candidate sourcing, assessment and selection - improving quality of hire.
- It aligns with our Staffing Principles and integrates with other talent management initiatives (e.g. orientation; learning/development; workforce planning; succession management; etc.).

### Hiring for performance involves both technical and behavioural competencies:

The [\*APS Competency Model\*](#) describes **behavioural competencies** as:

- the underlying characteristics that enable people to deliver superior performance in a given role or situation
- a means of looking at what someone does and how they do it
- a systematic way to define and understand the behaviours used to attain outcomes and results

**Technical competencies** are technical knowledge, skills and abilities required in specific roles within the APS. They can be described as behaviours in relation to how technical knowledge and skills are applied – how an individual uses what they know to achieve outcomes and results in their work.

### From a Talent Acquisition perspective:

- technical and behavioural competencies are **measurable knowledge, skills, abilities, or other personal characteristics** predictive of successful job and organizational performance;
- competencies are described in terms of the behaviours needed to successfully perform the work
- **behaviour levels/indicators** are highly specific, observable action that describes the performance level needed for a role;
- an ideal candidate **possesses** and **demonstrates** the critical technical and behavioural competencies required



## STAFFING PRINCIPLES

The purpose of the Government of Alberta Staffing Program is to attract and recruit top talent, from within and outside the APS, to deliver quality programs and services to Albertans. Through collaborative and innovative staffing strategies, hiring managers and human resource (HR) professionals work together to build a strong and sustainable workforce.

The following five ***Staffing Principles*** are integrated and demonstrated in the way staff are recruited and selected:

### **1. Staffing is a partnership.**

Managers and human resource professionals work together to identify and address workforce needs, ensuring fairness and integrity of the staffing process. Human resource professionals provide expert advice, guidance and assistance to hiring managers accountable for selection decisions.

### **2. Staffing addresses the current and future needs of the Government of Alberta.**

Staffing is strategic, innovative and flexible. Strategies are aligned with the Government of Alberta's business objectives and workforce plans, considering labour market trends and the economic environment.

### **3. Staffing has appropriate balance of access to employment opportunities.**

Decisions on the accessibility of staffing opportunities reflect the need to balance several important objectives including:

- access to opportunities by employees to encourage them to stay and build their careers within the Alberta Public Service;
- the importance of motivating top talent from outside the organization to join the Government of Alberta.

### **4. Staffing is efficient, effective and fair.**

Processes and practices are efficient in time and cost, and effective in selecting the right people for the right roles. Staffing decisions are impartial and consistent with staffing legislation and the policy framework. Participants in the staffing process feel that they have been treated equitably.

### **5. Staffing is conducted in accordance with the Alberta Public Service values.**

Processes and practices are conducted with respect, accountability, integrity, and excellence.



## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

The Staffing Principles are in line with the [Public Service Act](#) which outlines the methods that can be used to fill positions and the policy of selecting the most suitable applicant, giving preference where possible to internal applicants.

There may be situations where employees or applicants challenge selection or appointment decisions made during the staffing process. Using the Staffing Principles as the foundation to guide our actions and decisions helps to avoid these challenges.

Additional information on authority and conditions for appointment, as well as challenges to selection and appointment decisions, can be found in the [Alberta Public Service Staffing Overview](#) directive.

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This item has been replaced by a more recent resource or the content may be otherwise out of date. It is provided for informational and research purposes.



## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Hiring Managers

Provide a clear understanding of the job and job requirements in terms of immediate and future needs. They work in partnership with HR Consultants to determine staffing and assessment strategy, identify and describe the critical technical and behavioural competencies, prepare the job ad, and assess candidates. The decision to appoint from among the “qualified” candidates is the responsibility of the hiring manager.

### Human Resource Consultants

Provide expert advice and assistance to hiring managers in areas such as staffing strategy, assessment methods and policy interpretation. They work in partnership with hiring managers throughout the staffing process.

Ministries are responsible for maintaining complete competition and exemption from competition records to support all staffing decisions, and are the first point of contact for addressing concerns or challenges surrounding a specific staffing action.

#### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT

	Manager	HR
<b>PREPARATION AND PLANNING</b>		
1. Strategic conversation to discuss: strategic workforce planning, the work, the person, the staffing and assessment strategy, candidate sourcing, and an overall project plan.	X	X
2. Update job description and competency profile (if required).	X	
3. Ensure budget requirements are met.	X	
4. Complete Staffing Request form, obtain approvals and send to HR.	X	
5. Review and confirm information in Staffing Request.		X
6. Ensure there are no position abolished employees who must be given first consideration for the position.		X
<b>COMPETITION</b>		
<b>Advertising/Candidate Sourcing</b>		
1. Discuss selection criteria (based on minimum recruitment standards and critical behavioural and technical competencies).	X	X
2. Develop job ad and other candidate sourcing strategies based on selection criteria and strategic conversation.	X	X
3. Submit job ad for advertising.		X

10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT		
	Manager	HR
<b>Candidate Assessment and Selection</b>		
1. Screen competition based on the selection criteria.	X	X
2. Schedule interviews and/or other assessment methods.		X
3. Develop interview plan, with questions to cover all selection criteria.	X	X
4. Conduct interviews/assessments and make final selection decision.	X	X
<b>Pre-Employment Checks</b>		
1. Conduct reference checks on top candidate(s), based on selection criteria.	X	X
2. Coordinate the completion of security screening if applicable.		X
3. Verify post-secondary academic credentials.		X
4. Contact other pre-employment checks as required for the role.	X	X
<b>Employment Offer &amp; Regrets</b>		
1. Determine appropriate salary, start date, probationary period and, if applicable, obtain approval for expenses (e.g. interview and relocation, etc.)	X	X
2. Make the verbal offer.		X
3. Regret candidates who were unsuccessful as soon as an offer has been accepted or no suitable candidates were found.		X
4. Prepare and send out the written offer letter.	X	X
5. Forward signed offer letter and related documentation to payroll.		X
<b>EXEMPTION FROM COMPETITION</b>		
1. Review the rationale for an exemption from competition.	X	X
2. Assess candidate to ensure they are "qualified" for the position. (Note: If using the rationale "effective utilization of employees" and the candidate is not qualified, a developmental plan needs to be in place.)		X
3. Confirm appropriateness of exemption from competition as the staffing strategy and forward documentation for appropriate signature and finalization.		X
4. Conduct pre-employment checks as required (e.g. references; security screening; academic credentials; etc.).		X
5. Prepare and send out the written offer letter.	X	X
6. Forward signed offer letter and related documentation to payroll.		X

The [Competition Process Chart](#) provides an overview of the competition process, roles and staffing timeline targets.





## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

### STEP 1: PLANNING (STRATEGIC STAFFING PLAN)

Effective preparation is an integral part of the talent acquisition process. A more deliberate and focused planning approach will help support timely hiring decisions and high quality hires.

The [Strategic Staffing Plan](#) is a conversation tool to support both HR professionals and hiring managers, and is intended to facilitate strategic discussions and a project management approach to staffing practices. The tool is flexible in that it can be used to support ongoing conversations between you and HR throughout the year, and/or at the onset of a specific staffing request.

The tool covers a number of topics. Depending on the specific situation, and the timing of the conversation(s), you determine which topic areas are most relevant and what information you need to gather in preparation for the strategic conversation(s):

- *Strategic Workforce Planning:* Proactive planning enables thoughtful consideration and response to current and future workforce challenges. Vacant positions and newly defined work are opportunities to connect staffing to business and workforce plans, considering both current and future needs.
- *The Work:* Examine the emerging and long-term needs of the role and the organization. Clearly define the work and the competencies needed to successfully perform the work.
- *The Person:* Attract, recruit and select individuals that not only have the competencies needed for today, but also have the potential to be strong contributors to the APS in the long term.
- *Staffing and Assessment Strategy:* Customize your strategies to attract the best talent, considering all potential labour pools. Develop your assessment strategy, defining the processes and tools that will provide accurate and predictive information regarding a candidate's level of competence and potential for growth.
- *Candidate Sourcing:* Develop a targeted strategy to attract the talent you need.
- *Project Plan:* Initiate, develop, execute and evaluate a staffing project plan. Set timelines/dates and adjust as necessary throughout the staffing process.

Strategic conversations and a project management approach will assist you to:

- Create a strategy to attract the best talent and consider all labour pools.
- Gain a better understanding of the work requirements and the behavioral and technical competencies needed, now and in the future.
- Clarify roles, accountabilities and timelines.
- Develop the selection criteria, job ad and interview questions/assessment methods.
- Strengthen the HR and hiring manager business partnership.

**NOTE:** If a position is available for staffing, ensure that there are no position abolished employees who must be given first consideration for the position. You can verify this information with your HR Consultant.



## STEP 2: STAFFING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

### Appointments

As outlined in the Public Service Act (PSA), an individual can be appointed to a position in the APS by either a **competition** or an **exemption from competition**. The normal method of appointment in the APS is by competition.

Appointment to a position is interpreted to mean an appointment to a salaried position with specific terms and conditions of employment.

The following **are** considered appointments:

- when a vacant salaried position is filled
- when a change occurs that results in what could be *perceived as a new role* for an existing employee or as a *job opportunity* by other employees, specifically:
  - A significant or substantial portion of the duties change (same, higher or lower level). Note: There will be some judgment needed on whether an appointment or a reclassification is the most appropriate approach (e.g. should there be an opportunity for employees to compete; will the work be assigned to an employee).
  - Other terms of employment change in some fundamental way (e.g. employment status (such as “wage” to “temporary salaried”), ministry, or geographical location).

The following **are not** considered appointments:

- a temporary reduction or increase in an individual's hours
- an individual returning to their base position occupied before a secondment or a leave
- wage employment

In partnership with your HR Consultant, determine the most appropriate appointment method for the situation considering the career service concept, a fair and transparent process, and the balance between providing reasonable access to job opportunities for current employees (ministry and cross-government) and members of the public.



## Competition

Section 16(1) of the Public Service Act describes the three scopes of competition used in the APS: **open**, **limited** and **departmental**.

In recommending the scope of competition, consider the following factors:

- The supply of applicants is large enough to ensure the selection of a suitable applicant.
- The ability of existing APS employees (within and outside the ministry) to have access to opportunities to encourage them to stay and build their careers within the APS.
- The ability of the public to have reasonable access to public service jobs and the importance of motivating top talent from outside the organization to join the APS.

### Competition Overview

Scope	Purpose	Eligible To Apply	Not Eligible to Apply
<b>Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normally used to recruit to entry-level or hard-to-recruit classes and locations, or when you want to compare the quality of internal applicants to the external market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general public</li> <li>• APS salaried, contract of employment and wage staff</li> <li>• Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and persons with/eligible for a work permit</li> </ul> <p><b>(NOTE:</b> Employment with the GoA cannot commence until the appropriate documentation has been issued by the Government of Canada, including a positive Labour Market Opinion (if required) and a valid work permit.)</p>	
<b>Limited</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normally used to recruit to classes in which a sufficient pool of qualified in-service applicants from across the APS exists that may be interested in applying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APS employees in salaried temporary and permanent positions and contracts of employment</li> <li>• individuals employed by a provincial board, agency or commission that falls under the PSA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general public</li> <li>• wage staff (regular, 1450 and 2850 hour)</li> <li>• individuals employed by a provincial board, agency or commission that does not fall under the PSA</li> </ul>



### Competition Overview

Scope	Purpose	Eligible To Apply	Not Eligible to Apply
<b>Departmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normally used to recruit to classes that are above the entry level and specialized or unique to a ministry when there are qualified applicants within the ministry AND it is unlikely that there are interested and qualified applicants in other ministries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APS employees in salaried temporary and permanent positions and contracts of employment in the specific ministry recruiting to the position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>same as above, plus</li> <li>employees in other ministries</li> </ul>

### Exemption from Competition

Section 16(3) of the Public Service Act lists three rationales for exemption from competition. One of the three following conditions must be present for a legal appointment:

- Specialized knowledge or qualifications:**  
 The person to be appointed has specialized knowledge or qualifications which are unlikely to be bettered through competition.
- Urgency:**  
 The urgency of the requirement is such as to render the competition procedure impractical. These are rare, but you may have a situation where a delay in staffing the position would significantly disrupt program operations and where a qualified candidate is readily available.
- Effective utilization of employees:**  
 The exemption is necessary for the effective utilization of employees. (Note: Persons being considered for appointment under this criterion can only be existing salaried employees.) An example that would fall into this rationale is “redeployment opportunities,” where you need to restrict the field of candidates to a particular work area or group of employees within a ministry (e.g. a work area is undergoing downsizing and you will have to serve notice of position abolishment to those employees that are not successfully re-deployed.)

**NOTE:** Exemptions from competition where the “appointment date” is prior to the “approved date” (i.e. “backdated exemptions”) are not considered to be legal appointments.



## **Staffing Strategies**

As noted earlier, it's also important to customize your staffing strategies to attract the best talent. In addition to determining the appointment method (competition or exemption from competition), the following list identifies some examples of staffing strategies you may want to consider:

- Establish eligibility lists of qualified candidates that can be accessed to fill future vacancies.
- Advertise competitions as “open until suitable candidate found” if you anticipate the position/location is hard-to-recruit and/or to facilitate the immediate hiring of qualified candidates.
- [Student and recent graduate recruitment](#) (e.g. co-op placements; internships) as a long-term strategy to attract and develop a constant source of new talent.
- Secondments: A temporary assignment where an employee assumes another position or set of duties, and returns to his/her base or a comparable position upon completion of the assignment.
- Underfills: May be an effective staffing strategy if a position cannot be recruited to at the existing classification. This involves reclassifying the position to a lower level, and putting a developmental plan in place for the hired candidate.
- Collaboration with other ministries (e.g. internship programs that offer a rotation between different ministries; running one competition to fill similar vacancies in several ministries).
- Promoting employment opportunities to under-represented segments of the labour market (e.g. aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, the mature workforce, and new immigrants). You may be interested in getting involved with the [Ambassador Program](#), which offers a variety of tools and resources to promote the Government of Alberta as a positive career choice.

The potential for career development and growth is often marketed as a positive aspect of employment with the APS. It's important to keep this in mind when determining your staffing strategy – considering employees in your ministry as well as those who may be interested and qualified in other ministries.

The following summary document provides an overview of the framework governing staffing in the APS and a list of terms and definitions for the various appointment methods and recruitment strategies available to attract and recruit staff.

[Staffing in the APS: Appointment Methods and Recruitment Strategies](#)



## **Assessment Strategies**

While interviews are the most commonly used method of assessing candidates, there are other assessment methods that can add value as part of a systematic strategy.

There are tools that can be used to screen candidates before a face-to-face interview that reduce the number and increase the quality of candidates interviewed. As well, there may be other tools that can be used as part of the assessment process that provide more accurate and predictive information regarding a candidate's level of competence and potential for growth (e.g. writing test; presentation or other job simulations).

Work with your HR Consultant to develop an assessment strategy that makes sense and adds value – keeping it as streamlined and efficient as possible while giving you the best chance of hiring the right talent.

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## STEP 3: CANDIDATE SOURCING

Attracting talent is highly competitive. A targeted candidate sourcing strategy can help you reach high quality candidates and motivate them to apply, including those not actively seeking work. A targeted candidate sourcing/advertising strategy will attract the “right” applicants and enable candidates to apply effectively. Work with your HR Consultant to develop a targeted sourcing strategy that will attract a strong pool of talent in a timely and cost-effective manner. Below are some ideas to trigger thinking.

- In which media did the qualified applicants from previous similar competitions see the ad?
- What are the labour market conditions? Have they changed since you last advertised?
- Will the position location create difficulties in attracting candidates?
- Professional associations may be a good source of information about potential markets.
- Who is reading the media you are considering, and is this the candidate you want to reach?
- How can you reach top talent that's not actively seeking work?
- Social media may be an option to reach the ideal candidate. For example, LinkedIn is a professional social network.
- Increased awareness of opportunities may be promoted through the Ambassador Program, Career Days promotions, post-secondary institutions and professional associations throughout Alberta and Canada.

### Advertising/Writing Job Ads

- Using the information gathered during the strategic conversation, write directly to your target candidate providing information that will appeal to and motivate him/her to act on the ad. Remember, your job ad is the candidate's first impression of the Government of Alberta as an employer.
- Don't make your readers sift through extraneous information. Hook them, push them through the ad, and get them to act.
- Identify the qualifications needed for successful performance - related education and experience (MRS) and demonstrated technical and behavioural competencies.
- The Competency Profile identifies the critical behavioural and technical competencies, including behavior indicators that describe highly specific observable action that indicates the performance level needed for a role. These behavior indicators communicate the most important responsibilities of the job and how top performers achieve the results that are required.
- Job ads can direct candidates to provide information that clearly and concisely demonstrates how their qualifications meet the selection criteria. For example, asking candidates to provide specific information in their cover letter, or asking candidates to complete a [Competency Questionnaire](#).



## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

- Attach a position/competency profile to your ad. This is a great opportunity to provide additional information to the candidate.
- Highlight the communities, lifestyle and special allowances when advertising in rural and hard-to-recruit locations.
- Provide links to make potential candidates aware of additional information. For example, the [Research Careers/Calculate Pay & Benefits](#) tool provides the total compensation (salary and benefits) for each classification level.
- Determine the week that interviews will be held and include this in your ad as this will keep the process moving.
- Include a contact name and phone number and/or email address in the ad.
- Ad writing is a collaborative process. Your input is required to ensure that the ad accurately reflects what is needed for the role. This is crucial as your ad creates the foundation for your recruitment efforts and is the basis for candidate assessment and selection.

### **Minimum Recruitment Standards**

[Minimum Recruitment Standards](#) (MRS) outline the **minimum** qualifications that are needed for appointment to a job classification and identify any equivalent qualifications:

- MRS outline the preparation needed from both an education and experience perspective to perform that level of work. Both education and experience are valued – supporting a diversified workforce and career development/growth.
- Equivalencies allow for alternate equal qualifications. Where the MRS allow for equivalencies, they will normally be considered and the intent to consider equivalencies should be advertised (e.g. related degree and 2 years related experience OR related diploma and 4 years related experience).
- MRS establish uniform qualification levels across the public service and provide a fair, defensible and consistent process across government.

MRS are the basis for the qualification statement in job ads. Within the MRS there is flexibility to specify what education and experience is related and equivalent for the specific position being recruited to. The qualifications advertised in a competition may not be less than the MRS for the class.

The MRS is the **starting point** of assessing candidates for demonstrated evidence of the required technical and behavioural competencies. MRS assessment is both quantitative (years) and qualitative (demonstrates evidence of required competencies).





## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

### Common Media

- [Government of Alberta Jobs website](#)
- Professional association websites/newsletters
- Other internet job boards or specialized websites
- Social media
- Career section of Alberta's daily papers
- Alberta rural weekly papers
- Aboriginal publications
- Professional and trade journals
- Educational facilities

### Advertising Deadlines

It is important to keep these deadlines in mind to allow your HR Consultant and yourself sufficient time to prepare an effective ad and media strategy that will find the right fit for your team the first time.

- **Government of Alberta Jobs Website:** Your ad will appear on the GoA Jobs website immediately after being released to media in IMAGIS.
- **External Media:** Tuesdays at 1:30 pm for print media; Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1:30 pm for online media.

### Advertising Costs

Ministries pay for all external recruitment advertising. The advertising agency sends their invoices directly to ministries for review and payment. The invoices reflect the charges for media placement, long distance costs, courier costs, postal charges and production costs.



## STEP 4: CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT – INITIAL SCREENING

### Selection Criteria

Up-front conversations with your HR Consultant to define the ideal candidate identify the selection criteria, which then flows through to candidate sourcing, assessment and selection.

The related education and experience ([minimum recruitment standards](#)) and the critical technical and behavioural competencies, form the selection criteria. The selection criteria can also be thought of as the qualifications that candidates are assessed against (education, experience and demonstrated competencies).

### Qualitative Review of Application Information

Work with your HR Consultant to conduct initial screening of all candidates' application information against the selection criteria/qualifications in the job posting. Application information could include: online pre-screening questions, cover letter, resume, and any other information requested as part of the application process (e.g. competency questionnaire).

The intent is to “screen out” clearly unqualified candidates and “screen in” top talent. The initial screening process identifies those candidates who most closely match the selection criteria and who will advance to the next stage of assessment.

It's important to ensure that all candidates are treated consistently and fairly, and that screening/assessment decisions are transparent and defensible.

### **Process:**

- Review all applications to identify the candidates whose qualifications most closely match the selection criteria (related education, experience and relevant competencies). Typically candidates are screened into three groups:
  - #1 those that meet all the selection criteria (preferred group for further assessment);
  - #2 those that meet most of the selection criteria, or you are unable to determine if they meet the selection criteria;
  - #3 those that definitely do not meet the selection criteria.
- Compare the candidate's education and experience to the selection criteria:
  - Does the candidate meet the minimum “related education” outlined in the job posting?
  - Does the candidate meet the minimum years of “related experience” outlined in the job posting?
    - What relevant experience, professional development/training, and competencies has the candidate demonstrated/substantiated in their application information?
    - What results/achievements/accomplishments has the candidate described that provide initial evidence of the critical technical and behavioural competencies?



## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

- What examples from past employment or other experiences has the candidate provided as initial evidence of how they've demonstrated the critical technical and behavioural competencies?
  - Consider equivalencies as outlined in the job ad.
- If initial screening has resulted in too many #1 candidates to assess/interview, work with your HR Consultant to re-screen against tighter selection criteria, keeping within the requirements outlined in the job posting.
- Pencil the rating and rationale for rating on each application.
- Staffing timeline targets indicate that competitions should be screened, and candidates invited for further assessment, 8-10 work days from the competition closing date.

### **Other Screening Considerations**

#### *Previously Interviewed/Assessed Candidates:*

Carefully consider the decision to not interview/assess someone again. If there is reason to believe that the candidate might perform better in a second interview, they should be given the opportunity. The job may be different, the candidate's qualifications may have changed in the interim, or a different panel may have an effect on how a candidate presents themselves. If not granting an interview based on the outcome of a previous interview, note the reason on the application.

#### *Volunteer Experience:*

Volunteer experience should be evaluated and credited in a similar manner as salaried experience. Make sure you confirm the amount of volunteer experience.

#### *Outdated Education and Experience:*

Consider how outdated it is and if it is really applicable to the candidate's ability to do the job. Always give the benefit of doubt to the candidate.

#### *Overqualified:*

Candidates should not be screened out because they appear to be over qualified. The candidate may have had a change in lifestyle or interests. Don't be afraid of asking the candidate about their reasons for applying during the interview.

#### *Canadian Experience and/or Education:*

Screening applicants out because of a lack of Canadian experience and/or education is considered to be in contravention of the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act unless such experience is a bona fide job requirement (e.g. experience with Canadian Tax law), which must have been very clearly stipulated in the ad.



## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

### *Out of Province Candidates:*

In keeping with the mobility rights contained in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, candidates from outside Alberta should be considered on their merits and not screened out on the basis of their place of residence. If you've advertised outside of Alberta, consider paying interview and relocation expenses.

### *Foreign National Candidates:*

Foreign nationals can be considered eligible and offered employment; however, they cannot commence employment until the proper authorization/documentation is in place (e.g. Labour Market Opinion, if required, and a valid work permit).

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## STEP 5: CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT - INTERVIEWS

The interview is one of the most important tools you have to assess the candidate's fit for your team.

Behavioural event interviews help the panel determine the "right" talent – selecting candidates that not only have the competencies needed for today, but also have the potential to be strong contributors to the APS in the long term. As well, remember that the interview is a two-way process. The candidate is also evaluating the role and the work environment to determine a fit for them, and whether or not they want the job.

The information below provides a basic overview of the interviewing process.

### **The Panel Interview**

Interviews in the Government of Alberta are most typically done as panel interviews, usually with three panel members. The panel is responsible for screening the applicants, conducting the interviews and other appropriate assessment methods in order to select the most suitable candidate for a position.

#### *Panel Composition:*

- HR Consultant acts as the chair of the panel.
- Hiring manager plays a prominent and important role.
- Third member can be the hiring manager's supervisor, peer, or a technical/knowledge expert.

#### *Chairperson (HRC) Role:*

- Briefs and coaches the panel on interviewing techniques and guides the process.
- Opens and closes the interview.
- Leads and guides the interview.
- Asks assigned questions and probes as needed.
- Is the official note taker for the competition file.
- Leads the panel to discuss, evaluate and rate candidates between and after interviews using the Interview Plan and Assessment Summary template and the Assessment Rating Scales.
- HR has the delegated authority, as outlined in the Public Service Act, to certify candidates as "qualified."



## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

### *Hiring Manager Role:*

- Interacts with each candidate.
- Asks assigned questions and probes as needed; takes notes during the interview.
- As a panel member, rates candidates between and after interviews using the Interview Plan and Assessment Summary template and the Assessment Rating Scales.
- The decision to appoint from among the qualified applicants is the responsibility of the hiring manager.

### *Interview Plan and Assessment Summary:*

- An interview is only as good as its plan. Work in partnership with your HR Consultant to develop the [Interview Plan](#) to continue assessing the selection criteria.
- The Interview Plan and Assessment Summary template is a tool to record information and facilitate discussions and decisions during and after the interview process.  

It captures interviewing and probing questions to assess critical behavioural and technical competencies, and space to record candidate responses, competency assessment ratings, selection decision information and pre-employment checks conducted.
- In conjunction with the HR Consultant, develop behavioral based interview questions that ask for specific examples drawn from the candidate's experience for each of the critical competencies identified in the selection criteria.
- Ask candidates to describe specific events or situations where they played a key role. Through focused probing questions, the interview panel gathers evidence of what the candidate did, how he/she did it, and what the thinking process was. As they "tell the story", the candidate reveals information that provides insight into their behavioural and technical competencies.
- The idea behind behavioural event interviews is that past behavior or performance is a good predictor of future performance in similar situations. Behavioural questions ask the applicant HOW they handled a specific situation in the past rather than how they MIGHT OR SHOULD handle the situation.
- Sample competency based interview questions are available in the Interview Plan and Assessment Summary template.
- The template provides space to copy in the target behavior level and indicators from the competency profile. This information can be useful for probing purposes during the interview, and for rating purposes after the interview.
- Take thorough notes, getting as much information as you can on paper to make an accurate assessment of the candidate.
- Note all technical and behavioural competencies as demonstrated – the candidate may reveal information on several competencies through answering one question.



10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

*Documentation:*

- It is important to understand how FOIP (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) legislation affects staffing process documentation. Always be aware that access to documentation can be requested under FOIP. Candidates could have access to portions of a competition file, so only one official copy of the Interview Plan and Assessment Summary should be on file. The HR Consultant is responsible for collecting all panel members' notes and evaluations after the interviews/assessments and for ensuring the official copy is on the competition file.

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## STEP 6: CANDIDATE SELECTION

Carefully evaluating the candidate against the selection criteria ensures the candidate is being evaluated on each of the areas deemed critical for successful performance and ensures a fair and consistent approach.

Once all the assessment methods are complete, evaluate the level of competency demonstrated by the candidate, compare against target behavior levels/indicators, and identify a competency rating for each competency:

- “D”: Does Not Meet Target
- “M”: Meets Target
- “E”: Exceeds Target

### Overview - Evaluating and Rating Candidates

- Be prepared to take a few minutes between each interview to discuss and evaluate the candidates while the interview is fresh in your mind.
- Assessments for each competency are based on the candidate's behavior across all of the stories (i.e. rated on the level they demonstrated most of the time).
- Each panel member should complete the competency ratings independently, and then compare ratings and reach consensus on the final candidate ratings.
- The Assessment Rating Scales tool is available as a resource to help panels assess the **level** of competency that candidates demonstrated in their responses.
- Discussion and rating addresses each of the technical and behavioural competencies and determines whether or not a candidate is “qualified”.
- It also determines the “most suitable” candidate (merit principle) to be offered the position.





## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

### **Certifying Candidates as “Qualified”**

- Use the competency assessment ratings and look broadly at each candidate as a whole (where the sum is greater than the parts). Discuss their strengths and risks as they relate to the role and the work environment.
- Determine if the candidate is qualified.
- Identifying a candidate as “qualified” means that they’re fully suitable to do the job and that they could be hired, pending completion of pre-employment checks.
- The Public Service Act indicates that “an appointment to the position is subject to certification that the person to be appointed is qualified for the position.” The authority to certify candidates as qualified is delegated from the Public Service Commissioner to individuals with the appropriate training and experience.

### **Selection Decision**

- Compare qualified candidates and determine the “most suitable” candidate (merit principle) to be offered the position.
- If two candidates are equal, preference is given to the in-service applicant (career service concept).
- The decision to appoint from among the qualified candidates is the responsibility of the hiring manager.

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## STEP 7: PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

### Reference Checks

Checking references is an essential step in the assessment process. The information you receive can confirm what you heard/saw in earlier assessment methods, or it may raise some flags to consider. Reference checking is typically conducted by the HR Consultant but there may be situations where you are involved as well.

- References are to be completed after the interview/assessment method.
- Ensure there's a signed consent from the candidate with their authorization to check references.
- The best references are past or current supervisors or others who can evaluate the candidate's performance. Peers and subordinates are other reliable sources.
- You may contact a reference not specified by the candidate, providing the candidate is advised. Be sure to indicate to the candidate that they are one of the candidates being considered.
- Preparing for reference checks is as important as preparing for the interview. Your questions should be based on the selection criteria (e.g. technical and behavioural competencies assessed at the interview). The [Reference Check](#) template is available as a resource.
- Typically, three references are checked before extending an offer. If the information received is inconsistent, check additional references.
- References for internal and former GoA employees should be as thorough as for any other candidate.
- Provide any reference information back to the HR Consultant who will keep the records on file in a confidential location for one year.
- With regard to FOIP considerations, a reference can be thought of as having two parts - the factual job information (job duties, dates of employment, salary range), and the personal information and evaluative opinion. A candidate always has a right to see the factual job information. The personal information and evaluative opinion can be protected under section 19 of the *FOIP Act*.

Be sure to keep the process of reference checking confidential. If the candidate has questions about their reference information, refer them to the HR Consultant.



### **Post-Secondary Academic Credential Checking**

Verification of academic credentials is required to confirm that the candidate being considered has the post secondary academic credential(s) to meet the minimum recruitment standard for the position under recruitment. It involves ensuring that the candidate has the related post-secondary qualifications from an academic institution as represented on their application information and as confirmed during the interview.

This pre-employment check is completed by Human Resources.

### **Security Screening**

Security Screening is the general term used to describe Criminal Records Checks and/or Financial Management Risk Indicator Screenings. Ministries must request a Security Screening for positions identified in the [Security Screening Directive](#) when an individual is being appointed to one of the designated positions either by competition, exemption from competition, or by reclassification.

These pre-employment checks are completed by Human Resources.

**All of the above pre-employment checks are conducted and considered satisfactory before an offer of employment is made.**

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## STEP 8: MAKING THE OFFER AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK

### Making the Offer

Each ministry determines who is authorized to make employment offers on behalf of the ministry. HR Consultants typically make the verbal offer, followed immediately by a written offer letter. It's important to note that verbal offers can be considered a binding contract.

The HR Consultant works in partnership with you to:

- determine the salary
- negotiate the start date
- determine payment of relocation expenses and return service agreement for relocation (if applicable)

### **Some things to consider when determining salary:**

- Is the successful candidate a current GoA employee? If so, the [Salary Determination Directive](#) provides guidance for salary treatment (e.g. lateral, promotion and demotion situations).
- Minimum recruitment standards for the class – how does the candidate's qualifications compare to the MRS?
- Previous salary.
- Supervisor's salary - how will the salary compare with that of the supervisor of the work unit?
- Peer equity - how will the salary compare with that of others in the work unit?
- Budget implications.
- Market conditions - is there a labour shortage; is there a high demand for skilled workers; or is it an employer's market?
- Is this position in a hard-to-recruit location or a hard-to-recruit role?

### **The offer letter is coordinated by Human Resources and typically includes:**

- The position class and working title, location, salary, who to report to, starting date and time.
- Probationary period if applicable.
- Any special conditions of employment, such as maintaining a professional membership. If memberships in professional organizations must be maintained, ongoing responsibility for payment should be decided and outlined in the offer letter.
- If applicable, information on payment of relocation expenses and return-service agreement for relocation.



## **Providing Feedback to Unsuccessful Candidates**

Often candidates will telephone, particularly those that have been interviewed, to discuss which areas could be strengthened. Providing feedback to an unsuccessful candidate is typically done by Human Resources, but there may be times where you prefer to provide feedback to internal candidates. It is advisable to contact your HR Consultant prior to providing any feedback to candidates.

### *Do:*

- Provide objective factual feedback based on the critical technical and behavioural competencies.
- Review the candidate's responses/performance in the interview/assessment method to the target behaviour levels/indicators, prior to giving feedback.
- Focus on the job requirements.
- Identify what they did well.
- Identify areas they could improve on.
- Use specific examples from the interview/assessment method.
- Be aware that some areas are potentially more subjective and require careful judgment.

### *Do not:*

- Speak about the successful (or any other) candidate's qualifications or performance at the interview. Other candidates' rights to privacy must be protected.

Providing feedback to candidates supports the Staffing Principles and a transparent process – staffing practices are fair, staffing decisions are impartial, and staffing processes and practices are conducted with respect, accountability, integrity and excellence.

Providing feedback to candidates is also good business practice as it helps to create a positive impression of our organization and helps candidates to become better prepared for future competitions.



## 10 STEPS TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOUR TEAM

### STEP 9: ORIENTING NEW EMPLOYEES

Talent acquisition doesn't end at the offer letter. Creating a memorable welcome for each new employee is essential for his or her smooth integration into the ministry and to begin building a positive relationship with your new employee. Orientation is an ongoing process that helps employees understand their role, the business of their department and affects the way they feel about you as a supervisor, their job and the organization.

- Let new employees know about the resources available in the GoA [New Employee Orientation](#) site.
- Have a look at the [Orientation Supervisor's Checklist](#).
- Check with your HR Office to see if your ministry has specific new employee orientation programs/resources.

### STEP 10: EVALUATING THE TALENT ACQUISITION PROCESS

Gather information to assess both quality of hire and satisfaction with the talent acquisition process.

Work with your Human Resource Consultant to:

- Take a few moments at the end of the process to discuss continuous improvement opportunities. For example, did the candidate sourcing strategy provide a good pool of quality candidates? Did the interview plan ask the right questions? etc.
- Follow-up three to six months into the appointment to analyze the effectiveness of the hiring decision. Did the process result in a high quality hire?
- Follow-up with new hires regarding their level of satisfaction with the talent acquisition process. For example, how well did the job advertisement and/or position profile reflect the actual job? Did the interview/assessment method provide them with a fair opportunity to present their qualifications?

