

Chapter 25

Public Service Commission – Out-of-Scope Staffing

1.0 MAIN POINTS

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is responsible for ensuring appointments to the classified division are based on merit. PSC has delegated responsibility for staffing to certain ministry staff including the responsibility to keep sufficient documentation to demonstrate that staffing decisions were based on merit.

By March 15, 2015, PSC had developed procedures for reviewing the documentation kept by the hiring managers in the human resources files. It plans to implement these procedures by April 2015.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

PSC is the central human resource agency for the ministries within the Government of Saskatchewan. PSC works with ministries to provide support services such as recruitment and classification, payroll administration, and strategic support, including labour relations and organizational development services.¹

In 2011, we assessed PSC's processes to ensure out-of-scope classified positions were staffed in compliance with *The Public Service Act, 1998* and regulations. Our *2011 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 12, concluded that for the 12 months ended August 31, 2010, out-of-scope classified positions were staffed in compliance with *The Public Service Act, 1998* and regulations. It included two recommendations. Our *2012 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 40, reported that up to August 31, 2012, PSC had implemented one recommendation.

This chapter reports the results of our second follow-up of the remaining recommendation.

To conduct this review engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate PSC's progress towards meeting our recommendation, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. PSC agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

We reviewed documents provided by PSC, interviewed PSC personnel, and examined a sample of staffing files.

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION

This section sets out the recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at March 15, 2015, our expectations (in italics), and PSC's actions up to that date.

¹ Public Service Commission, *2013-14 Annual Report*, p. 4.



3.1 Documents Showing Merit Followed Up

We recommended that the Public Service Commission use a risk-based process to confirm that essential documentation related to staffing out-of-scope positions is kept. (2011 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement April 10, 2013)

Status – Implemented

The Public Service Act, 1998 (section 21[4]) (Act) requires that “appointments to positions in the classified division are to be made on the basis of merit.” Under the Act, PSC is responsible for ensuring that the Government can demonstrate that appointments to the out-of-scope positions of the public service are based on merit. To demonstrate merit, we expected staffing files to have documentation that shows the successful candidate had greater merit than other candidates (e.g., assessment from interviews, ranking of candidates, references).

Since 2010, PSC has delegated responsibility for recruitment and selection, including file documentation, to ministry staff (hiring managers) and outlined the ministries’ accountability in client service agreements. In 2011, PSC set minimum documentation requirements for demonstrating that appointments are based on merit (e.g., results of interview or alternate assessment process and references) that it expects hiring managers to follow.

By March 15, 2015, PSC had developed procedures for reviewing the documentation kept by hiring managers in the human resources files. PSC plans to assess if hiring managers maintain sufficient documentation to support their decisions that hiring was based on merit. (e.g., document the results of the interview assessments, and reference checks). The Assistant Chair of PSC has approved these procedures for implementation by April 2015.