

Canada

Mission and vision Striving for excellence

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is an independent agency reporting to Parliament, mandated to safeguard the integrity of the public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service.

The PSC is dedicated to building a public service that strives for excellence. We protect merit, non-partisanship, representativeness and the use of both official languages.

We develop policies and guidance for public service managers and hold them accountable for their staffing decisions. We conduct audits and investigations to confirm the effectiveness of the staffing system and to make improvements. We report our results to Parliament.

We recruit talented Canadians to the public service, drawn from across the country. We continually renew our recruitment services to meet the needs of a modern and innovative public service.

For more information, please visit the PSC Web site at www.psc-cfp.gc.ca.

The new Public Service Employment Act



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Overview of the new PSEA *Modernizing human resources management*

The new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), which came into effect on December 31, 2005, is a key component of the new *Public Service Modernization Act* (PSMA). The PSMA is a human resources management legislative reform that aims, among other things, to increase the flexibility for deputy heads to tailor staffing systems to the needs of their own organization.

What's different under the new PSEA?

Under the new PSEA, the Public Service Commission (PSC) maintains the authority to make appointments to and within the public service. However, through delegation instruments, the PSC has delegated that authority to deputy heads of departments and agencies. The deputy heads are encouraged to then subdelegate authority to as low a level as possible.

Core values

The new PSEA is designed to facilitate hiring by providing flexibility to departments and agencies, while ensuring they respect the new Act's core values of merit and nonpartisanship, as well as the guiding staffing values of fairness, transparency and access.

Human resources planning

The new Act places an increased focus on human resources planning to ensure that an organization's staffing and staffing processes are aligned with its business plans and priorities.

The new Act defines merit for the first time. A new approach to merit allows hiring managers to select candidates based not only on the essential qualifications of positions, but also, if desired, on current and future asset qualifications, organizational needs and operational requirements relevant to the position. The new approach to merit also provides the additional flexibility of establishing employment equity objectives as an organizational need.



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Oversight

The new Act places a greater emphasis on the accountability of the PSC to Parliament for safeguarding the integrity of appointments in the federal public service. Through various oversight tools, such as its policy-making, monitoring, investigative and auditing powers, the PSC holds deputy heads accountable for the exercise of their delegated staffing authority. The PSC plays an increased role in overseeing the political impartiality of the public service by granting permission and leave for candidacy in elections; providing guidance with respect to involvement in political activities; and investigating allegations of inappropriate political activities by public servants.

Complaints to the Public Service Staffing Tribunal

The new PSEA changes the way to handle staffing complaints in internal appointment processes. Employee concerns should be discussed and resolved at the organizational level as soon as possible after they arise.

The new concept of informal discussion allows persons who have been eliminated from consideration in an internal appointment process to discuss the decision with the person or persons responsible for the decision. The hiring manager will be able to address any concerns and, if necessary, correct any errors or omissions, before the appointment process is finalized.

Informal discussion, which fosters a climate of greater transparency, is meant to address issues promptly. It may reduce the number of formal complaints.

Deputy heads may conduct their own investigations of internal staffing processes and appointments, before taking any action to revoke an appointment or take corrective measures.

The new Act creates the Public Service Staffing Tribunal, which will consider complaints related to lay-offs, the revocation of appointments and allegations of abuse of staffing authority in internal appointments.



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The new Appointment Framework Entering a new era in public service human resourcing

Under the new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), which came into effect on December 31, 2005, the Public Service Commission (PSC) continues to have the authority to make appointments to and within the public service. However, the new Act also provides for the delegation of many of its authorities to deputy heads, and through them, to the lowest level possible in their department or agency.

The PSC has developed a new Appointment Framework that came into effect at the same time as the new Act. It guides deputy heads in building appointment systems tailored to their own organization's needs and requires them to respect legislative requirements, staffing values and PSC policy. At the same time, the Framework helps human resources advisors and public service managers in their management of staffing.

The Appointment Framework has three components: appointment policy, delegation and accountability.

Appointment policy

The new PSEA allows deputy heads to customize the appointment process to meet the needs of their own organization. However, all departments and agencies are to use the Framework as a basis for their appointment policies. The Framework gives managers the flexibility to use their own judgment in making appointments.

The PSC has developed policy on important issues that all organizations need to address, such as employment equity, official languages, assessment, informal discussion, area of selection, and corrective action and revocation. The PSC has developed tools and guides in support of its requirements and expectations.

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Delegation

The PSC has delegated its appointment authorities to deputy heads through the signing of a delegation instrument that identifies all delegated authorities and related conditions. The instrument also sets out how deputy heads will be held accountable for their delegated authorities.

As part of the instrument, the PSC sets performance expectations for staffing activity. Departments and agencies report to the PSC on the implementation of their appointment authorities and the results achieved.

The PSC monitors how organizations exercise their delegated authorities. It has the power to take remedial measures, including additional conditions or limitations, or the partial or complete withdrawal of some or all of the delegated authorities. Deputy heads must therefore ensure that accurate information is maintained in relation to their appointment system as a whole and in relation to individual appointment actions.

Accountability

The PSC holds deputy heads accountable for the exercise of their delegated authorities. The Staffing Management Accountability Framework (SMAF) identifies five key dimensions for management systems: governance, planning, policy, communication and control.

Deputy heads must put in place their own management frameworks based on the SMAF. They will be able to monitor and adjust their organizational staffing performance against PSC expectations and against the risk areas identified for the public service as a whole or specifically for their organization.



Oversight Ensuring the accountability of federal organizations

Under the new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), the Public Service Commission (PSC) retains the authority to make appointments to and within the public service. The PSC has delegated that authority to deputy heads of departments and agencies through delegation instruments. Deputy heads may then subdelegate that authority to as low a level as possible. They may also customize their staffing systems to meet the particular needs of their organization.

The PSC is strengthening how it monitors and assesses departmental and agency performance in staffing. It will hold deputy heads accountable for respecting the public service staffing values, the relevant legislation and the PSC's Appointment Framework.

The PSC remains accountable to Parliament, however, for overseeing the integrity of appointments in the public service. The PSC reports annually to Parliament on the appointment system, and may make special reports to Parliament on urgent or important matters as appropriate.

PSC and oversight tools

The PSC provides several oversight tools for holding deputy heads accountable for the delegated staffing authority. These tools include the development of policy; the ability to set terms and reporting requirements for the delegated authority; and investigations, audits and studies.

Through monitoring, audits and studies, as well as investigations, the PSC may identify risks to the integrity of the staffing system. It will then recommend corrective measures. If necessary, the PSC will impose sanctions, such as conditions on the exercise of delegated authority or, in exceptional circumstances, the partial or complete withdrawal of delegated authority.

As organizations assume more control over their staffing systems, the PSC will increasingly focus on its oversight role.

For more information, please visit the PSC Web site at www.psc-cfp.gc.ca.



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Monitoring of staffing activities Demonstrating sound exercise of staffing authorities

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has developed a broad appointment policy that is binding for deputy heads in exercising their authorities under the new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA). The Staffing Management Accountability Framework (SMAF), together with other PSC oversight mechanisms such as delegation instruments, reporting and audit, is used to determine whether deputy heads are exercising their authorities in conformity with legislative requirements, the PSC's appointment policies, and the appointment values of the new PSEA.

The SMAF describes the PSC's expectations of deputy heads and provides indicators linked to these expectations. The indicators are mandatory for all delegated organizations.

Deputy heads are required to implement measures in their respective organizations to demonstrate that they meet the indicators. Although departments and agencies may establish their own measures, the PSC has developed some mandatory measures for all organizations. These are based on legislative and PSC policy requirements, as well as risks identified for the public service as a whole.

In establishing their measures, deputy heads must be able to demonstrate that their organizations respect the requirements of the new PSEA and of other statutes, as well as the PSC appointment policy and the conditions of delegation of staffing authorities.

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Deputy heads are expected to:

- ensure that accurate information is maintained to provide a fair and reliable representation of their activities;
- ensure that staffing management practices, controls and results are actively monitored in their organization, whether the staffing is done internally or by an external service provider;
- adjust and improve their staffing systems and practices as required;
- submit reports to the PSC on time for the PSC to report to Parliament; and
- participate in the PSC's oversight requirements such as audits, investigations and special studies.

The PSC also conducts database monitoring activities. Using qualitative and quantitative sources, these activities support the risk-based oversight framework. They also provide extensive staffing-related information at the departmental or public service-wide level.



The new

Public Service Employment Act

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Political activities

The right to engage in political activities, and the impartiality of the public service

The new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) is explicit about the rules related to political activities in the public service and applies to involvement in federal, provincial, territorial and municipal politics. Public servants may engage in any political activity, as long as it does not impair, or is not perceived as impairing, their ability to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner. The political involvement of deputy heads is limited to voting.

What is "political activity"?

The new PSEA defines political activity as:

- any activity in support of, within or in opposition to a political party;
- any activity in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate before or during an election period; or
- seeking nomination before or during the election period, or being a candidate.

Examples of political activities include speaking at a political meeting, fundraising for a political organization, working for a political candidate, or wearing a campaign button.

Candidacy in an election

To be candidates in federal, provincial, territorial or municipal elections, public servants must first receive permission from the Public Service Commission (PSC). In some cases, they may be required to take leave without pay. If elected at the federal, provincial or territorial level, public servants will cease to be federal employees. If elected municipally, public servants may cease to be federal employees, take leave without pay or continue to work, depending on the circumstances.



Improper political activity

Anyone may submit an allegation of improper political activity by federal public servants to the PSC for investigation, but only a person who is or was a candidate in an election may make an allegation of improper political activity by a deputy head. Running for office without the PSC's permission would be an example of an improper political activity.

A founded allegation of improper political activity may lead to corrective action, up to and including dismissal of the employee.



Investigations Safeguarding the integrity of the federal public service

Under the new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), which came into effect on December 31, 2005, the Public Service Commission (PSC) is accountable to Parliament for safeguarding the integrity of the public service appointment system.

Under the former PSEA, the PSC conducted both appeals and investigations. The PSC's new role is limited to investigations. The PSC's investigative powers, which complement its monitoring and audit powers, are an important oversight tool.

The PSC carries out investigations into staffing as well as other identified issues, such as possible problems in the application of the PSEA or violations of the PSEA, its Regulations or PSC policies that affected the selection for employment. The PSC conducts investigations, both as part of its own mandate and at the request of deputy heads, in the following circumstances:

- if the appointment or proposed appointment is not based on merit (for external appointment processes);
- if an error, omission, improper conduct, political influence or fraud affected the selection process; or
- if there was an allegation of improper political activity by a federal public servant or a deputy head.

PSC and investigations

The PSC conducts investigations to establish relevant facts about allegations that are raised or issues that were identified within departments and agencies and by applicants from outside the public service. The PSC analyses the facts to arrive at a conclusion so that necessary corrective measures may be proposed, considered and taken. In each case, the investigator determines the most appropriate approach. Investigations can be conducted through fact-finding meetings, written representations, on-site visits or teleconferences. The new PSEA requires investigations to be conducted as informally and expeditiously as possible.



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Deputy heads and requests for investigations

Under the new PSEA, deputy heads may conduct their own investigations of delegated internal staffing processes and appointments, before taking any action to revoke an appointment or take corrective measures. They can choose to conduct their own investigations or ask the PSC to do so on their behalf. If the PSC investigates at the request of a deputy head, its mandate is limited to reporting its findings to the deputy head, who remains responsible for applying any corrective measures.



Audits and studies Providing independent assessments of staffing activities

The Public Service Commission (PSC) carries out audits, studies and statistical studies as part of the PSC's responsibility for safeguarding the integrity of staffing in the public service and the political impartiality of public servants.

Audits

The PSC performs audits on the staffing activities of individual government departments and agencies, and on government-wide issues examined across a number of departments and agencies. These audits are objective and systematic examinations that provide independent assessments of the performance and management of staffing activities. Their purpose is to provide objective information, advice and assurance to Parliament, and ultimately Canadians, on the integrity of the appointment process in the federal public service.

Studies

Studies are more descriptive or exploratory in nature than audits. While still focussed on staffing issues, they usually concentrate on:

- describing a subject or developing an information base;
- exploring that subject or information base; or
- developing a method to assess that subject or information base in the future.

Statistical studies

Statistical studies are analytical studies that make use of the PSC's extensive data holdings to shed light on issues related to hiring and staffing activities in the federal public service. These statistical studies usually concentrate on:

- describing in analytical terms how the staffing system functions;
- addressing specific policy or program issues from an analytical perspective; and
- providing analytical support to the PSC's oversight functions.

For more information, please visit the PSC Web site at *www.psc-cfp.gc.ca*.



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Services Supporting federal organizations

The new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) provides federal departments and agencies with greater flexibility to manage their human resources systems. The Public Service Commission (PSC) supports organizations in exercising their delegated appointment authorities. Its modernized recruitment, EX resourcing and assessment services help federal organizations meet the changing needs of the public service.

Recruitment services

Recruitment services include providing advice on such matters as developing overall recruitment strategies, establishing areas of selection for external processes, and screening applications, based on criteria determined by organizations. The PSC offers departments and agencies access to time-saving, targeted inventories, for such groups as policy leaders, internal auditors, post-secondary graduates, students, employment equity group members and bilingual persons.

The PSC manages **jobs.gc.ca**, the Government of Canada's Internet-based single window for advertising job opportunities in federal organizations looking to hire from outside the public service. The PSC also manages a system that allows members of the public without Internet access to call and listen to the same job advertisements that are posted on the Internet.

A new on-line application and screening tool

Recent changes to the use of the national area of selection may mean an increased number of applications for officer-level positions in the National Capital Region. The PSC has developed a national, electronic on-line application and screening tool, the Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS), to assist departments and agencies with their external staffing needs.

The PSRS will screen applications electronically based on a number of requirements, such as essential education and experience requirements, as identified by the organization. It will also allow managers to apply other merit criteria (for example, asset requirements for education and experience, operational requirements or organizational needs) to further screen the candidate pool to a manageable number of applications.

Executive resourcing services

The PSC's executive resourcing services provide leadership in the development and delivery of public service-wide resourcing for the Executive group (EX-1 to EX-3). Components include:

- resourcing services and advice to deputy heads, hiring managers and aspirants to the EX group;
- management and delivery of the complete resourcing process; and
- information about interdepartmental talent pools and initiatives to increase the representation of members of employment equity groups.

Assessment products and services

A full range of assessment products and services for internal and external staffing is available to meet organizations' specific needs. The PSC offers consultation services, executive counselling services and tailor-made assessment solutions. In addition, the PSC provides an array of tools, including assessment centres, simulations, second language evaluation, and standardized reference checks, to assist in the selection and development of candidates for both EX and non-EX level positions.

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Key Decision Points in the Appointment Process

Old and New Public Service Employment Act (PSEA)

Before – Old PSEA	Key Decision Points	After – New PSEA	
 Most staffing was vacancy-driven (reactive) 	HR Plan	Link to business and employment equity planning (proactive)	
 Statement of qualifications established 	Criteria	 Establish merit criteria (essential qualifications, asset qualifications, operational requirements, organizational needs) 	
 Had to go internal first (external only if in the best interest of the public service) Chose competition or without competition Established an area of selection 	Process	 Choose internal or external Choose advertised or non-advertised Establish an area of selection 	
 Chose and applied assessment instruments 	Assessment	Choose and apply assessment instruments	
 If relative merit used, had to rank candidates and could establish eligibility list If individual merit used, determined whether individual was qualified 	Selection	 Choose "right fit" Ranking no longer required Use other merit criteria as needed 	Notifications Allows for discussion before finalizing internal appointments
 If relative merit used, appointed highest-ranked candidate on eligibility list If individual merit used, appointed individual 	Appointment	Appoint "right fit"	 Respect waiting period (minimum five days)
 PSC conducted investigations (open and closed processes) Appeals to the PSC Recourse Branch (closed processes only) 	After Appointment	 Deputy heads or PSC can conduct investigations Complaints may go to Public Service Staffing Tribunal (internal appointments only) 	
 Ad hoc basis or pilots 	Results Checked	 Systematic analysis Integrated reporting – contributes to HR plan 	

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Capabilities and Benefits



he Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS) is the Public Service Commission's (PSC) automated external staffing tool. PSRS was made available to all PSC regions beginning on November 1, 2005. Enhancements to PSRS were made effective December 31, 2005, in time for the coming into force of the new *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA). The public will continue to access job opportunities through the PSC Web site at **www.jobs.gc.ca**.

Hiring managers in departments and agencies can use the tool to initiate and complete external staffing actions, manage the staffing process far more efficiently than they could manually, and be confident that it meets the new legislative and policy requirements. Furthermore, by using this tool, little additional work will be required by departments and agencies to provide the data the PSC needs to fulfill its reporting responsibilities to Parliament.

Why do we need PSRS?

We need PSRS to help manage large volumes of applications; it provides us with a tool to effectively screen down the number of applicants and efficiently manage what would otherwise be an enormous workload increase.

The current paper-based staffing process is cumbersome and time-consuming. Hiring managers have to review and sort through many applications to select candidates. The process is also difficult to monitor and track for compliance with important values like merit, non-partisanship and a representative public service.

Over time, the number of applications received from the general public has steadily increased. Tests in 2002 looking at the impacts of National Area of Selection (NAOS) on mid- and lower-level jobs showed a 128% increase in applications received and a 91% increase in the number of referrals to departments. With the eventual implementation of NAOS across the country to provide access to Canadians to federal public service jobs, the number of applications that will need screening will continue to increase. NAOS expansion began in April 2006 with officer-level positions in the National Capital Region.

PSRS helps reduce the number of applications that need manual screening by 77%. It was built with the input of public service managers who developed the experience statements that can be used to rate, rank and refer applicants in the job families where external staffing is most common. No other tool exists that has "built-in" compliance assurance for federal public service staffing policies and rules, while at the same time offering many resource and time-saving advantages.

What does it do?

PSRS carries out a large number of the manual tasks from advertisement preparation to actual referral of applicants who meet merit criteria. While it requires more preparation at the front end, the real benefits are obtained during the screening process. The referral of candidates is faster and the selection process is shorter and easier. The system's library of experience statements add even more value. They can be used to rate, rank and refer applicants on relevant experience across 13 job families, covering nearly half of the jobs typically staffed through external staffing. The job families that are accessible through PSRS are:

- Acquisition and Supply Specialist (PG-1 to 3)
- Senior Acquisition and Supply Specialist (PG-4 and 5)
- Administrative Assistant (AS-1 and 2; CR-4 and 5; ST-SCY-2 to 4)
- Junior Informatics (CS-1 and 2)
- Computer Specialist (CS-3)
- Senior Computer Specialist (CS-4 and 5)
- Human Resources Advisor (PE-1 to 4)
- Internal Audit (AS-3 to 5)
- Policy (PM-3 to 5; ES-3 to 5)
- Clerical/Secretarial (General) (CR-1 to 5; ST-SCY-1 to 4)
- Communications Specialist (IS-1 to 3)
- Senior Communications Specialist (IS-4 and 5)
- Welfare Programs (WP-3)

Who benefits?

Hiring managers benefit from a robust tool that allows them to advertise job opportunities, receive applications and conduct pre-screening and searches, helping them manage the recruitment process efficiently. They will have fewer referrals to sort through, but much better candidate matches with their requirements. An evaluation by the PSC's Personnel Psychology Centre found that PSRS screening was superior to manual screening in terms of the quality of candidates referred.

Departments and agencies with highly distributed and specialized workforces will benefit from the wide, robust and efficient external search capability to help them find qualified candidates that match the merit criteria they are looking for.

Contact information

You can find out more about PSRS at: www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/pssmp-pmdfp/index_e.htm.

If you have questions about PSRS in your region, please contact Victoria Kay at **victoria.kay@psc-cfp.gc.ca** or (613) 992-0940.





Applying for a job in the federal public service

This guide is designed to help you understand the process involved in applying for positions within the federal public service.

How to find out about job openings

- Visit the Public Service Commission of Canada's Web site, *jobs.gc.ca*, and click on "*Jobs Open to the Public*", to view job advertisements in the federal public service.
- It is recommended that applicants view *jobs.gc.ca* frequently as some advertisements are posted for short periods of time.
- You may also phone the automated Infotel line, to listen to a recorded message which lists jobs that are available in your calling area. The toll-free number is 1-800-645-5605. For the hearing and speech impaired, the TTY toll-free number is 1-800-532-9397. The toll-free numbers are accessible at any time.

Recruitment programs

- Students The *jobs.gc.ca* Web site includes student work programs: the Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP), the Co-operative (Co-op) Education and Internship Program, and the Research Affiliate Program (RAP).
- Graduates If you are a university graduate, or about to graduate, select "*Post-Secondary Recruitment*" on *jobs.gc.ca* for specific details on career choices. You will also find information about how to apply to this national initiative to recruit university graduates to entry and mid-level positions in the federal public service. If you are more specifically interested in helping shape Canada's public policies, select "*Recruitment of Policy Leaders Program*".

How to apply

On-line

- At the bottom of each job advertisement, click on the "Apply Now" link to apply on-line. This is the most commonly used method to apply for a job within the federal public service.
- The first time that you apply for a job on-line, you will be required to create an account and choose a password. You can also create a profile to match your interests with currently advertised jobs, as well as view the status of your applications.

Important

- It is important to view the "Who Can Apply" section on each job advertisement to ensure that you are eligible to apply.
- You may only apply to currently advertised jobs or inventories. Unsolicited applications will not be considered.
- To avoid the risk of virus infections, e-mail attachments are not accepted.

If you experience difficulties navigating our Web site or require additional information, please call us; toll free, at 1-888-780-4444, or 1-800-465-7735 (TTY). You may also visit the Public Service Commission (PSC) office nearest you (for a list of addresses visit the "*Contact Us*" section on the *jobs.gc.ca* Web site).



Internet access

If you do not have Internet access, you may consider visiting any one of the following locations: university campus career centres, libraries, community centres, Internet cafés, Canada Employment Centres, Employment Centres for Students, or PSC regional offices. You may also call these toll-free numbers: 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232) or 1-800-926-9105 (TTY), for information on the nearest federal public Internet access location.

Alternate ways of applying for jobs

- An alternate to the on-line means of submitting an application is always made available to allow for barrierfree access for disabled persons or other eligible persons, under our obligations to the duty to accommodate policy. Details are provided on each job advertisement.
- In other circumstances, while applicants are strongly encouraged to apply on-line, applications sent by mail, fax or delivered in person will also be accepted. Please read the content of the advertisements carefully for details to this effect.

Checklist of things to remember

- Applications, either paper or electronic, must be received by the date and time indicated on the job advertisement.
- Your résumé and application must demonstrate that you meet the requirements listed in the job advertisement. If you do not clearly demonstrate that you meet the requirements, your application may be rejected.
- Make sure that you provide all relevant information requested in the job advertisement, such as, your citizenship and your language proficiencies.

- If you studied outside of Canada, you will be required to provide proof of Canadian equivalency for your diplomas and/or certificates. For more information about obtaining equivalencies, visit the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials Web site at: www.cicic.ca.
- If you are a member of a designated employment equity group, you may choose to indicate this on your application. It is your responsibility to inform the departmental contact (i.e. the person who phones to schedule an interview) or the Public Service Commission, in a timely fashion, of any accommodation you require to enable you to be assessed in a fair and equitable manner. Information received relating to accommodation measures will be addressed confidentially.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is an independent agency reporting to Parliament, mandated to safeguard the integrity of the public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service. In addition, the PSC recruits qualified Canadians from across the country.

Note: The Public Service of Canada is committed to building a skilled, diverse workforce which reflects Canadian society. As a result, it promotes employment equity and encourages women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, and members of a visible minority group to apply to positions within the federal public service.