How to Apply

A Guide to Applying for Federal Public Service Job Opportunites

Opportunities in the Federal Public Service are typically posted as Selection Processes. This Guide aims to decode the process and support candidates, both internal and external, with step by step explanations and tips for how to be successful.

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Fisheries and Oceans Canada   Pêches et Océans Canada

Canada

Part 1:

Selection Processes

Introduction and Background

The recruitment process for Government of Canada Departments and Agencies is typically in the format of a Selection Process. These two words encompass various steps which this guide aims to break down into manageable and understandable pieces, to support any person who may be interested in applying to Government of Canada opportunities.

It should be noted that Delegated Managers (those who have staffing rights/authority) within the various Government Departments and Agencies do have flexibility in how they choose to run individual Selection Processes; therefore this guide is only a general overview of the various steps and possibilities that may be included in any particular process.

Selection Processes have two (2) categories: Internal and External.

An Internal process means that only people who are already employees of the Government of Canada can apply.

An External process means any person who is a Canadian Citizen (living in Canada or abroad) can apply.

Read more on

Part 2:

Job Opportunities

Understanding Posters and Applying Online

Jobs.gc.ca

Government Departments and Agencies are required to use the online application system called the Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS). This means that all Selection Processes must be posted online on the Jobs.gc.ca website.

In order to be able to apply to any of the opportunities found on this site, you need to set up a profile/account.

How to set up a profile on Jobs.gc.ca

Anyone can set up a profile on this website. Follow this link, and select the Create an Account option in the bottom right to get started! You will be required to enter an email address so make sure you have a valid one set up in advance.

> **Smart Tip:** If possible, use a personal (not work) email address that incorporates your name. This helps with clarity and communication throughout the overall selection process, and is more professional. You can set up a free address at Gmail or Hotmail/Outlook if you don't have one.

Example: Jane Doe - J.Doe@notreal.com, Jane.Doe@notreal.com or JaneD123@notreal.com

The set-up profile process includes 7 steps that you will be guided through online. Once you've completed everything, the system will email you a confirmation that your account has been set up.

You are now ready to start applying!

The online application process

Now that you have a profile and account, you can start searching and applying to the available job opportunities on the site. These opportunities are often referred to as job **Posters**.

> **Smart Tip:** Posters contain various sections. It's important to read through each section in full before beginning the application process. If you have questions about anything listed in the poster, there is usually a contact name listed at the very bottom of the poster (under Contact Information) who you can get in touch with to get clarification.

Understanding the Sections of a Job Poster

The type of information that you can expect to see on Government of Canada job posters is explained below. As you review this section, you may want to print out a job poster and follow along.

At the top of the poster you will find the following information:

Position Title(s)

This is the official title of the position. Sometimes there are various titles listed, for example when a process has multiple streams.

What is a stream?
Streams are used on posters where the job titles may be different but the overall required criteria are similar enough to run a single selection process.

Reference Number

This number is automatically generated by the Public Service Commission when creating a new job poster.

Example: DFO17J-018649-000016. **Do not** use the Reference Number for any correspondence about the process.

Selection Process Number

The identification number assigned to the selection process. This number must be included in your application and will be cited in further communication to you.

Example: 17-DFO-NCR-EA-CCG-212518. **You should note** the Selection Process Number in any correspondence about the process.

Department or Agency Name(s)

The name of the public service organization to which the process belongs.

Note: As the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) is a Special Operating Agency within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), you will see DFO listed on posters for CCG jobs.

Location(s)

The geographic locations of the positions that are expected to be staffed from the selection process (e.g. Calgary, Ottawa, Montreal).

Classification(s)

The occupational group and level to which the position has been classified.

Classifications are tied to the field or type of work the job relates to. It's good to familiarize yourself with these so that you can search for the types of jobs that would be of interest to you.

More information can be found in this link.

Tenure

The length of the job opportunity.

For external processes this is typically either indeterminate (permanent) or term (temporary).

Internal opportunities may include tenures such as acting or assignment/ secondment or deployment.

Salary

The salary range for a position is based on the classification. This corresponds to the Rates of Pay set out by the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada.

Closing Date and Time

The last date that applications will be accepted through the online system. Applications must be submitted and received by the date and time

specified on the job poster. Applications received after the indicated time on the closing date will not be accepted.

> **Smart Tip:** Be sure to note the **time zone** for the closing date. If a poster is open nationally, the closing time may be listed in a different time zone than yours.

Additionally, Inventory processes may be run with no closing date, but they might indicate when a first round will start, and how often extractions of applications will happen.

Who can Apply

This is where you can confirm if the poster/selection process is Internal or External. It will explain exactly who is able to apply. This is sometimes referred to as the "Area of Selection." Make sure you meet this criterion because it will be enforced.

Important Messages

This section may include important details which the hiring managers want to emphasize. You should make yourself aware of and consider this section when applying to the process.

Duties

This section will provide some additional details about the exact duties and responsibilities associated with the job(s).

Work Environment

This section will describe a bit about the general work environment of the Department and may even contain information about working in a specific region.

Intent of the process

This section outlines the reasons for the poster and selection process including how many positions currently need to be filled through the process.

Sometime the requirement is TBD (to be determined) or anticipatory.

The poster may also indicate, in this section or elsewhere, that the selection process may be used to staff additional, similar positions. This means that other managers may also staff jobs from this selection process.

This section may also discuss the tenure of the position(s) to be filled.

Information you must provide

This section outlines the necessary information you must provide (submit) through your online application. It usually consists of a CV/resume, and either a covering letter or the completion of various screening questions.

Essential Qualifications

Under this section is a listing of all the criteria that YOU MUST HAVE or DEMONSTRATE in order to be successful through the selection process.

Failure to provide detailed information or proof that you meet the criteria will result in you being unsuccessful and you will not move on to the assessment stage of the process.

In the first phase (Screening) typically only the Education and Experience sections are reviewed and assessed through your online application.

A process may also include essential qualifications such as any knowledge, abilities or personal suitabilities that are required, but these criteria are usually assessed later on in the process.

Smart Tip: For the online application, it is important that you provide as much information as you can. Never assume that the person looking at your application knows anything about you or understands your past work history.

Provide concrete details and specific examples about what you've done and how you've acquired the education and experience criteria. Including dates and details that match your CV can help, and may even be required. Make sure to read the instructions!

Using the **STAR** method when completing your answers can help to make sure you include enough detail.

S – Describe your **situation**

T – Explain your **task**

A – Talk about the **action**

R – Describe the **results**

> **Smart Tip:** It is not acceptable to simply put "see CV" as your answer to an application question. You must always provide details.

Other or Asset Qualifications

A poster might also have criteria listed under this heading. These criteria are NICE TO HAVE and might be used, so you should include them in your application if you have them.

Asset criteria are over and above what is absolutely necessary for the job, and they are sometimes used to help manager's pick their top choice from a pool when they are hiring, but not having assets does not *exclude* you from the process.

Conditions of Employment

This section will list certain conditions that are not part of the assessment for the process, but MUST BE MET before a candidate can be appointed to a job (hired).

Examples include such things as: official language levels, a valid security clearance, medical certificates or driver's license, confirmation of willingness to travel, etc., but could include any number of other criteria depending on the job requirements.

Other Information

This section can include a lot of different types of information that the Department or hiring managers want the applicants to know. Be sure to read it and inform yourself.

Preference

This section informs you of the Government of Canada's priority to give preference to Veterans and Canadian citizens, in that order.

Part 3:

Screening and Assessment, and Qualifying

Understanding Screening and Assessment, and Qualifying in a Pool

Understanding the Terminology (definitions):

Screening – this is the initial stage where a submitted application is first reviewed to determine if a candidate's education and experience criteria qualify them for the first assessment phase.

Assessment – this is usually comprised of at least 2-3 steps. Most commonly, it often includes the following three types of assessments and in this order – but it can vary.

- A knowledge test
- An interview
- Reference checks

Screening of the Online Application

You've got an account for Jobs.gc.ca and you've found a poster for a job opportunity you're interested in.

Now what? You read through the poster and make sure you meet all the essential criteria and you click the APPLY ONLINE button.

You now have to complete the online application and include all the relevant details asked for before submitting it.

Different processes will require different information. Some of the information will be basic personal data which is pulled directly from your account profile. You may have to check a box to confirm everything is still accurate.

Other information like your CV/resume, covering letter or screening question answers will have to be completed and then saved.

Note: You can save your CV to your profile and reuse it over and over – but remember to review it each time you apply to a new process, in case it needs to be updated.

When completing your application, you can start it, save it and come back to it as often as you'd like before the closing date and time.

Note: Be aware that the system will <u>time you out</u> so you should never leave your application open and unattended for any period of time. Always save it and log out if you need to step away from it or take a break.

> **Smart Tip:** Copy the screening questions and paste them into a word document. Draft your answers in the word document and when you're finished, log back into the system and paste your final answers into the fill boxes provided **and save!** This way you never have to worry about being timed out and losing all your hard work. This approach also allows you to save your answers outside the system in case they might be useful for another process in the future!

After an application is submitted, it's held until the closing date of the poster and then it is extracted (pulled) from the system for screening.

There are two steps of _screening_ that happen at this phase.

The first step is automatic screening. Here, the system looks for discrepancies or anomalies from what is expected on any given application. For example, if you leave one of the answers to an <u>essential criteria</u> blank, or you answer NO, the system will screen you out because you MUST HAVE this criterion to move on. For this reason it is very important to make sure you fill out the application in full and pay attention to detail.

The second step in the screening phase is done manually by a person or a team. It could be the HR department, or the hiring manager, etc. At this step, somebody will review your application manually to determine if you have included enough detail and if your answers are strong enough to move you on to the next phase. This is where using the STAR method can really help, to ensure you give fulsome responses.

If you get through the screening phase, you will be notified via email that you have been successful and are moving onto the first assessment phase. Typically for a government process open to the public (run externally) – there is no obligation to notify candidates who are _screened out_. Keep this in mind if you don't hear anything back.

If you are curious about the status of your application or the length of time between applying and hearing if you were successful, you can email the contact listed on the bottom of the original poster. Be aware that each phase of the process can take a significant period of time. At minimum you should wait about 3 weeks before following up.

The Assessment

Knowledge Exam

The first assessment phase that follows the screening is usually a written knowledge exam. Sometimes they are administered electronically, and other times they are in person.

Either way, you will receive email correspondence inviting you to take the exam, with all the relevant information that you need to know including: date, time, place (if in person), etc.

The invitation will usually also include the criteria that the exam will be assessing, so you can prepare accordingly.

It is always your responsibility to reply to confirm that you are interested in participating. Sometimes you will also have to confirm other information, like your language of preference (English or French).

On the day of the exam, you will be responsible for:

1. Getting to the location

or

2. Ensuring you can access a computer with working internet/email capability and word processing. Other things may also be required, depending on the process, which will be pre-determined and communicated to you in advance.

If the exam is being administered in person, it will be much like taking any type of other written exam . Hard copies are provided , and you'll have a set time to complete it and hand it in.

If the exam is being administered electronically, you will receive an email with all of the relevant documents including the exam (usually in Word format). You will again have a specific time period to complete the exam and return it via email the way you received it.

Smart Tip: Always reply directly to the original email that you received with the exam attached. This makes it much clearer for the assessment team who is receiving and collecting all the completed exams.

After this assessment phase is completed by all the candidates and all the exams are marked, the same process repeats to inform a candidates that they have been successful and inviting them to the next assessment phase – the Interview.

Interview & References

If you are successful at the exam phase, you will receive an email indicating this and informing you that you will be moving on to the Interview phase.

Additionally you will receive correspondence inviting you to the interview with all the relevant details (date, time location, etc).

Once again, it is always your responsibility to confirm you would like to participate, and provide any other information the assessment team might ask for. Sometime at the interview phase, references are also requested. This may come at the same time as the interview invitation, or it may come as a separate request.

Smart Tip: When picking your references, make sure they match any criteria that the assessment team asks for. Sometimes there are specific parameters such as:

• one reference must be a current supervisor

It is also a good idea to ask the people who you are thinking of using if they are willing and able to be a reference for you. If they say yes, you should also provide them with the criteria that the reference will be assessing. This is usually included in the request you receive.

Qualifying in a Pool

A **Pool** is an unranked group of applicants who have met the qualifications for all the essential criteria assessed through the selection process.

Once you have successfully completed all the phases of the screening and assessment as described above, you will receive email correspondence informing you that your name has been put into a *Pool of Qualified Candidates* for that particular process. Be sure to read the email in full so you are aware of any important details. For example – some pools have an expiry date, and other pools may be only "partially qualified" which can mean that there may be additional assessments to complete at a later time.

The Pool details from the selection process are shared with Departmental hiring managers for their consideration when staffing their positions. Section 4 describes in more detail the appointment (hiring) phase.

NOTE: It is very important to understand that success in a selection process and qualifying in a Pool <u>does not mean</u> that you are guaranteed a job offer or a job.

Part 4:
Selection for Appointment
Being Selected for a Position

Once a Pool is established as described in Section 3, the manager(s) who have a need to hire will have the opportunity to look at the pool to identify candidates for a job offer. This offer can be made based on one or more of the following criteria, and is often referred to as the *Right-Fit* process.

- Managers have the option to do further assessment of any additional quali-fications required specifically for the position in question (if necessary)
- Managers may implement other criteria that do not require further assessment, including but not limited to:

  - willingness/ability to meet the conditions of employment (e.g., shift work, travel, overtime);
  - experience or qualifications in relation to the strengths and weaknesses of the work team;
  - experience or qualifications in relation to the degree of relevance to the specific position being staffed; and
  - employment equity (EE) group membership status in cases of appointment to positions where EE groups are under-represented.

Qualified candidates in the pool may be contacted directly by the hiring manager for any of the above reasons, or other reason, to determine if they are in fact the Right-Fit for the position being staffed.

Once a Right-Fit candidate is selected and finalized – the candidate will be notified by the hiring manager or someone from their team. This will include the presentation of a job offer and begins the process for hiring.

There are certain things that also need to be confirmed before hiring can be finalized. These are normally considered Operational Requirements and/or Conditions of Employment, and can include but are not limited to:

- Official Languages Levels
- Security Clearances
- Medical certificates
- Licenses

Part 5:

Joining the Canadian Coast Guard

Want a career where you help save lives? Want a career where your employer owns helicopters, air cushioned vehicles and icebreakers?

The Canadian Coast Guard offers a sea of careers that few organizations can emulate. We offer our employees the chance to save lives; protect Canada's pristine environment; contribute to Canada's growing economy; and travel to areas so remote that your only neighbour is wildlife. In short, we are anything but ordinary!

As an organization, we operate ships of all types; cutting-edge helicopters; and employ about 4,500 people, who work tirelessly to protect and secure 243,000 kilometers of Canada's vast and rugged coastline.

We are looking for members who have a passion for helping others and who will bring innovative ideas, creativity, energy, enthusiasm and willingness to contribute and influence our path to a brighter future.

The Canadian Coast Guard has been recognized as one of Canada's Top Employers for Young People in 2017! Apply now so you don't miss the boat!

Please visit the CCG Careers Page to view all the current Posters for jobs with the Canadian Coast Guard.

Get onboard! Visit our Members Site to learn about our team.

For any question or concerns regarding this document please contact the OPP Recruitment Team – Sophia.lega@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.