

Inside Info about Federal Government Competitions

Most candidates in or outside government “don’t know what they don’t know” about Public Service Commission competitions generally—or much about application screening, multiple-choice testing and competency-based evaluation specifically. Also, external candidates need to understand that federal recruitment is more complex than recruitment for provincial and municipal jobs, so one-size-fits-all training doesn’t work.

Government information—whether online, in brochures and emails, or given verbally—is opaque at best. Worse, anecdotal chit-chat is rife but largely misinformed. To become an informed candidate, **look over the value-added cautions below.**

“Need-to-Know” and “Nice-to-Know” Info

- **Common multiple-choice tests** in competitions—the online and supervised, in-class Public Service Entrance Exams and other written exercises, the Situational Judgement Test, Written Communication Proficiency Test, Written Communication Test and General Competency Test: Level 2—**are the same for all jobs for which they are used as screening tools.** Each test has a permanent bank of validated parts which are rolled into and out of competitions to change the make-up—but virtually nothing else—of a test each time it is used.
- **“Passing” the tests doesn’t mean that you get an interview** or even to the interview pool, from which the candidates who are finally interviewed are drawn.
- **Test scores can be used as-is or manipulated by the government:** scores can be weighted equally or weighted differently; a high cut-off can be applied for one test once the other test pass score has been met; scores can be circumvented by using an exclusion order to promote employment equity; scores can be adjusted using a z-score formula to factor in regional differences; scores can be downplayed to use random selection in advancing some candidates.
- **You need to inquire about and protect your candidacy throughout competitions.** Application system breakdowns during competitions; incorrect info posted about test dates, times and locations; score retrieval problems; and misdirected emails or emails addressed to you from government consultants that go into spam are some of the things that have happened before.
- For external candidates considering the Post-Secondary Recruitment competition, you should know that **age is not a factor in hiring** despite the designation for this annual campaign which can deter candidates from applying who are not recent university or college graduates.
- Despite glib statements to the contrary by the government, **you can indeed prepare for the tests.** But you need to do so **using the right instructions, the right sample exercises, and the right knowledge and insights** that apply specifically to federal government officer-level tests. Our study materials provide this.

Click here to return to the **webpage** to see our test descriptions and pop-ups with sample questions, then **think about how best to prepare yourself for taking the tests relevant for your competition.**