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People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate
People & Standards Division

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0. Preamble

0.1 Delegating Authority to conduct Industrial Relations

Authority to conduct Industrial Relations is devolved upon Ministries and government departments and ultimately upon the respective Permanent Secretary.

0.2 Industrial Relations Procedure

The Industrial Relations Unit (IRU) within the People and Standards Division is the central regulatory body with regard to industrial relations across the Public Service. The process concerning negotiations with employees' representatives with respect to Documents/Agreements or any other negotiating processes regulating salary structures and working conditions is being clarified as explained hereunder in respect of approvals and in the light of fiscal responsibility.

The IRU is to be informed, at the very initial stages, of any negotiation processes to be undertaken with the management and/or employees' representatives, through the respective Permanent Secretary. Heads of Department, after consultation with the respective Permanent Secretary, are to engage the IRU in the negotiations and design or amendments of salary structures and/or negotiations regarding working conditions undertaken with employees' representatives. The Head of Department and IRU will then agree on an official position and the IRU will assist the Head of Department throughout the negotiating process. Full responsibility of any process, including implementation, lies with the Head of Department through the respective Permanent Secretary. The final version will be as endorsed by the IRU supported with financial approval by the Ministry responsible for Finance.

Should the Head of Department opt to not involve the IRU in negotiations, this shall be endorsed by the respective Permanent Secretary. The negotiating team will invariably still require the approval from the IRU on a negotiation position as well as the financial approval from the Ministry responsible for Finance. The IRU is to inform the respective Head of Department and the Permanent Secretary on whether, in its opinion, the intended negotiating position conforms to central policies adopted across the Public Service and informs the Ministry responsible for Finance accordingly. The respective Permanent Secretary is obliged to ensure that the process is concluded within the parameters established by the IRU. Any process, including implementation, lies within the responsibility of the Head of Department through the respective Permanent Secretary.

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1. Drafting the call for applications

1.1 Authority to issue the call for applications

The Permanent Secretary of any Ministry requires no authority to issue calls for applications*, provided that:-

- i. the vacancy is included in the HR Plan approved by the Permanent Secretary, and the Coordinating Committee led by the People & Standards Division, in accordance with the Ministry for Finance budgetary allocation;
- ii. if the vacancy is to be filled in a new position instead of a post/grade, approval has been obtained from the People & Standards Division;
- iii. if the call concerns positions which are EU-related / EU fund management-related / EU co-financed, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for EU Affairs has been consulted, where necessary;
- iv. prior to issuing calls for Public Service grades or positions which are governed by a Classification Agreement, the Resource Support and Services Limited (RSSL) should be consulted with a view to determining whether the duties in question can be performed by RSSL or other surplus personnel; and
- v. calls for applications for the filling of positions which are not governed by a Classification Agreement and which are open to public officers should be, invariably, open also to RSSL personnel and to Public Sector employees who are performing duties in the Public Service.

*In the case of **calls for applications specifically aimed at persons over statutory retirement age**, in areas of acute shortage, the prior approval of OPM should be sought for the issue of the call. Such requests for approval should be backed by a strong justification and should be made only after calls for applications issued in the normal manner have not yielded any successful candidates. Once approval is forthcoming, the call may be issued, and the selection and appointment process is to be carried out under delegated authority as explained in this Manual. The parameters below should be observed:-

- a. Appointees are to be given a one-year definite contract, renewable, with inclusion of the objective reason of “temporary substitute employee” in terms of regulation 7[4][a] of S.L.452.81 entitled “Contracts of Service for a Fixed-Term Regulations”;
- b. When a retired officer is selected for a vacancy in the same grade s/he held prior to retirement, s/he will be placed on a salary equivalent to his/her salary point as on date of retirement (if applicable), with due increments and progression (if and as applicable);
- c. Appointees are to be considered as public officers and shall carry the responsibilities and obligations pertaining to public office, in particular the enforcement of Disciplinary Regulations governing the Public Service, and
- d. Persons so engaged / re-engaged are not eligible to apply through ‘normal’ calls for applications for the filling of vacancies in the Public Service.

The Permanent Secretary may delegate authority to issue calls and take other actions under this Manual to heads of department within the Ministry or to the Director responsible for Human Resources, subject to any internal clearance procedures which s/he may opt to put in place. In the absence of a Permanent Secretary, such delegation of authority is exercised by the Principal Permanent Secretary. In this Manual, the term “the authorities” is used to refer to those senior officials with authority to issue calls, appoint selection boards, issue results, etc.

In the case of the filling of posts in the General Service and Messengerial Grades and other posts/positions to be filled across the Public Service, through a central call for applications, as determined by the Principal Permanent Secretary, the head of department shall be the Permanent Secretary, People & Standards Division or such other public officer as the Principal Permanent Secretary may designate either generally or for particular grades/positions.

1.2 Targets to be achieved by filling a vacancy

Before drafting a call for applications, the authorities should have a clear idea of the targets to be achieved through the filling of a vacant post or position. These targets shall:

- i. dictate the duties expected of the selected candidate and should be stated in the call for applications ;
- ii. form the basis of the eligibility requirements stated in the call for applications.

1.3 Types of calls for applications

In the process of issuing a call for applications, the authorities are to be guided by the following principles: -

- i. when, by virtue of a classification agreement, eligibility is open to a class of officers in a grade which by its very nature is limited to one particular department or ministry, the vacancy should be advertised through a Departmental Circular. However, the authorities should ensure that any such officers who are not serving within the department/ministry (e.g. Officers who are detailed with a Public Sector entity, serving within a Private Secretariat, etc) are notified of the issue of the call for applications ;
- ii. when a vacancy is to be filled through a call for applications open to public officers across the service and/or seconded/on loan to public sector organisations, the vacancy should be advertised through a Service-Wide Circular, which should be electronically circulated to other Ministries/Departments for onward transmission to their staff and the entities falling under their portfolio;
- iii. when a vacancy in a position is to be filled through a call for applications open to public officers across the service and to employees in Public Sector Organisations, the vacancy should be advertised through a Sector-Wide Call for applications, which should be electronically circulated to other Ministries/Departments for onward transmission to their staff and the entities falling under their portfolio;
- iv. when a vacancy is to be filled through a call for applications open also to persons from outside the public service, the vacancy should be advertised through a Public Call for applications published in the Government Gazette; the call for applications may also be circulated

- electronically to other Ministries/Departments for onward transmission to their staff and the entities falling under their portfolio and/or advertised in the local press;
- v. where the call for applications requires the holding of a written examination, arrangements are to be made with the Registrar of Examinations for the holding of the examination under the auspices of the Board of Local Public Examinations. On being notified of the examination result by the Registrar, the authorities shall then continue with the second stage of the selection process.

The People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate may authorise the concurrent issue of an internal (Service-Wide or Sector-Wide) call and a Public Call for a particular vacancy, in order to address requirements across the Public Service in the shortest time possible. When such approval is granted, for the sake of transparency, the Public Call should clearly indicate that the order of merit pertaining to the Public Call shall only be resorted to once the internal order of merit is exhausted, subject to availability of vacancies within the validity period of the result. In this regard, both results are to be published on the same date, as different dates of expiry might lead to recourse to the order of merit of the Public Call while the internal order of merit is expired but not exhausted.

The call for application should conform to the applicable specimen as determined by the People & Standards Division. Officers drafting the call should follow carefully the directions on the templates. Otherwise, the prior approval of the People & Standards Division should be obtained for any changes to the standard wording.

In order to afford interested applicants a wider spectrum of the calls for applications being issued in that week, together with the applicable parameters, all internal and external calls for applications are to be issued on a Friday to coincide with the issue of the Government Gazette, unless this is a public holiday, in which case calls are issued on the preceding day. The procedure to be following for the submission, approval and uploading of calls for applications, together with the applicable timelines, is explained in detail in Appendix 1 to this Manual.

1.4 Eligibility requirements and duties of the post

The eligibility requirements stated in the call for applications should be:

- i. Specific: not ambiguous or generic. Phrases such as “a pertinent degree” should be avoided. The areas of qualifications or experience required should be clear so that the Selection Board will not find difficulty to determine whether or not a candidate is eligible. It is recommended that the words “or related areas” should be included to cater for the possibility of other related qualifications. Specific eligibility criteria increase the transparency of the selection process, as the reason for considering an applicant as ineligible would be clear.
- ii. In conformity with any applicable law, classification agreements (in the case of grades/positions which are thus regulated), and the eligibility benchmarks set out by the People & Standards Division (in the case of ad hoc fixed term positions). Any departure from the established eligibility requirements should be approved by the People & Standards Division and the PSC shall be informed accordingly. Moreover, the People & Standards Division may, in certain cases, seek the PSC’s approval for such departures.

- iii. A public officer must be confirmed in his/her current appointment prior to being eligible to apply laterally or for promotion to a higher grade/position, unless the current appointment is in a different class/stream or in a definite position, but may apply for a lower grade/position even if not confirmed and whether in the same stream or not. In the case of officers applying within their career stream / sectoral agreement, when eligibility is open to holders of grades at different levels within the career stream, an officer who is not confirmed in his/her current grade, but is confirmed in his/her previous grade within the same stream, shall be eligible to apply, provided all other eligibility requirements are satisfied.
- iv. Directly related to the role and duties of the selected candidate.

1.5 Assessment methods

At the stage of drafting the call for applications, it is best to decide on the assessment methods to be utilised for the assessment of candidates. After taking into consideration the nature of the vacancies to be filled, the authorities shall determine whether a qualifying stage is required and the method chosen, as well as the respective pass mark, shall be stated in the call for applications. In such a case, applicants should be informed that only those successful in the qualifying stage will qualify for the interview. Furthermore, the result sheet must show separately the marks obtained by each candidate in respect of the qualifying stage and the interview, as well as the overall total. The condition set that “candidates must obtain a pass mark in the qualifying stage in order to qualify for the interview” is to appear both in the call for applications and on the result sheet.

Unless specifically stated in the call for applications, supplementary assessment mechanisms should not be used as a qualifying component on the basis of which candidates can be excluded from the selection process. Candidates are to be informed beforehand of any non-qualifying methods to be adopted which were not stated in the call for applications. Any supplementary assessment mechanisms used should form an integral part of the selection process and applied to all eligible candidates. Assessment methods may include any combination of the following:

- Interview;
- trade or practical test;
- written examination;
- extended interview;
- short tests of writing proficiency, multiple choice questions, case studies, or IQ tests;
- psychometric testing.

1.6 Other essential points

- i. Calls for applications should be issued in both official languages (i.e. Maltese and English), unless:-
 - a) it is more feasible to issue internal calls in the Maltese language only, or
 - b) the call is advertised overseas.
- ii. There shall be no discrepancies between the English and Maltese versions of calls for applications.
- iii. The call for applications should clearly state the accepted methods for the submission of applications.
- iv. At least ten working days should be allowed for the submission of applications unless the PSC authorises a shorter period.
- v. The call should state how the result of the selection process shall be notified to the applicants concerned and make reference to the right of appeal.
- vi. The call for applications should state the pass mark determined for the selection process.

1.7 Corrections to, or withdrawal of, the call for applications

- i. The authorities may make corrections to a call for applications without the need for PSC approval, provided that:
 - a) corrections are published and advertised with the same prominence as the original call; and
 - b) if the corrections result in the widening of the eligibility parameters, the closing date should be extended by at least ten additional working days so that applicants who are rendered eligible are given the opportunity to apply.
- ii. The withdrawal of a call for applications must invariably be authorised by the PSC on the basis of a strong justification by the authorities.

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2. Dealing with applications and appointing the selection board¹

2.1 Receipt, registration and acknowledgement of applications

In the case of vacancies in salary scales 16 (excluding Industrial Grades) and higher, applications are to be invariably submitted through the Government Recruitment Portal (recruitment.gov.mt). Such applications will be automatically registered and acknowledged through a system-generated email.

The authorities shall ensure that HR Units within Departments provide support to applicants who require assistance in submitting an online application. In this regard, the authorities shall ensure that officers responsible for assisting applicants to submit online applications are fully knowledgeable of the process and perform this task with diligence.

In the case of the Industrial Grades (i.e. Groups I – IV and Other Industrial Grades), the authorities shall designate an officer to receive applications, which, apart from the Government Recruitment Portal, may also be submitted through e-mail, by post or delivered by hand. The designated officer shall be responsible for:-

- i. Keeping an appropriate record of the date and time of receipt of each application;
- ii. Registering each application, giving it an application number and acknowledging it immediately and, in any case, by not later than five (5) working days from its receipt, and
- iii. Manually adding into the Government Recruitment Portal, under the appropriate vacancy, those candidates who applied through e-mail, by post or delivered their application by hand.

Applications should be checked to ensure that they are complete, i.e. include all required documents. The following procedures shall apply:-

- a) if applications are received manually, checking has to be carried out there and then;
- b) in the case of online applications or applications received by post, the applicant is to be informed at the earliest of any incorrect/incomplete/missing documents;
- c) in the case of digital certificates, it should be ensured that all the relevant pages, including the QR Code of the downloaded records issued through Blockcerts, are submitted with the application; and
- d) in all cases (excluding cases where applicants are awaiting MQRIC equivalence where a maximum of four (4) months is allowed for processing) applicants are to be granted up to two (2) working days after closing date or up to two (2) working days from date of notification, whichever is the later, to submit the incorrect/incomplete/missing documents.

The above provisions shall apply to all selection processes unless the call for applications states otherwise.

In the case of applicants awaiting MQRIC equivalence, a note should be attached to the application stating that, should the equivalence report not be available by the time of assessment, such applicants are to be assessed provisionally by the Selection Board, informed accordingly and also informed that they will be disqualified from the selection process if the MQRIC equivalence report is in the negative or not presented within four (4) months from the closing date of the call for

¹ The timeframes applicable to the procedures described in this Section are also found in Appendix 2 entitled Standard Operating Procedures – Timeframes for the Selection Process, which is a step- by-step guide for officers responsible for HR matters and for officers/persons appointed on Selection Boards

applications. Moreover, subject to availability of vacancies, appointment cannot be made before the positive equivalence report is received from MQRIC.

The HR Unit of the ministry/department issuing the call for applications is to request the GP47 from the Director responsible for HR of the Department where the applicant is serving and in so doing, is not to indicate the vacancy applied for. The GP47 should be forthcoming within three (3) working days. Upon receipt, the GP47 is to be uploaded as an attachment onto the respective candidate's application on the Admin Recruitment Portal.

A schedule of applications is automatically drawn up by the Government Recruitment Portal system.

A schedule of complete applications received by the deadline should be drawn up – the schedule should be drawn up on an Excel worksheet and should include, in separate cells, the name, address, grade and Department (if applicable), date of birth, ID Number, electronic address, mobile phone number, qualifications (optional), etc. of every applicant.

Moreover, a similar, but separate, schedule in respect of applications which were incomplete by the closing date should invariably be drawn up.

Applications which are received after the closing date and time (i.e. late applications) shall not be accepted.

2.2 Appointment of the Selection Board

Before the closing date of the call for applications, the authorities shall appoint a Selection Board from amongst suitable and competent serving officers and/or persons listed in the Standing Selection Panel of the relevant Ministry.

The following parameters are to be observed as regards the composition of the Selection Board:-

- i. Each Selection Board shall include three (3) persons – the Chairperson who should be a serving public officer, and two (2) persons appointed from the Standing Selection Panel.
- ii. Selection boards for professional and specialised posts should include two (2) specialised members so as to have sufficient specialised input throughout the selection process. Thus, the Selection Board for a professional/specialised post should be composed of a Chairperson (being a serving public officer and one of the mandatory specialised members), a specialised member appointed from the Standing Selection Panel and another member appointed from the Panel who need not be specialised in the field. If no specialised persons are available from the Standing Selection Panel, then one of Panel members is to be replaced by a serving public officer who is specialised in the field. In order to determine whether a post is of a professional/specialised nature, the following procedure is to be followed:
 - a. If, in the opinion of the authorities, a post should be considered of a professional/specialised nature, an appropriate recommendation, together with justifications, is to be submitted for the consideration of the Principal Permanent Secretary, through the People & Standards Division on the generic email prc.opm@gov.mt, prior to appointing the Selection Board;
 - b. The final decision as to whether a post is of a professional/specialised nature, and hence as to whether the provisions of this sub-paragraph are applicable, is taken by the Principal Permanent Secretary.
- iii. If the parameters at (i) and (ii) above cannot be satisfied, then the authorities are to seek People & Standards Division approval.

- iv. If, for any reason, a person nominated to form part of a Selection Board is not a serving public officer or does not form part of the SSP of the respective Ministry, the prior approval of the PSC is required.
- v. PSC approval is also to be sought in those cases where, due to a large number of applicants and in order to complete the selection process within the given timeframe, the authorities consider it appropriate to have multiple Selection Boards in respect of a single call for applications.
- vi. Public officers who are appointed to sit on Selection Boards must be at least one grade higher than the vacancy to be filled.
- vii. As far as possible, the Selection Board composition should include members of both genders.
- viii. A substitute Chairperson and Member/s are also to be invariably appointed in case any of the board members become ineligible when the list of applicants is known.

The authorities shall ensure that a selection board does not include:

- i. members of staff of the secretariat of the Prime Minister, or of a minister, or of a parliamentary secretary; or
- ii. members of the House of Representatives of Malta, mayors or councillors in Maltese local councils, or members of the European Parliament; or
- iii. candidates for election to the House of Representatives of Malta, a Maltese local council, or the European Parliament, or persons who were candidates in the most recent election to any of the said bodies;
- iv. holders of posts in the structure of a political party, or persons who held such posts within the last five years; or
- v. any official of a trade union which represents applicants for the vacant post; or
- vi. a person who is under a disqualification to serve on selection boards issued by the Commission; or
- vii. any other person who would be placed in a conflict or an apparent conflict of interest if s/he sat on the selection board.

Each member of the Selection Board is required to sign PSC Declaration Form 8 regarding Political/Trade Union Activities – available for download from the website of the People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate - before starting the selection process. Should the Chairperson or any of the Members of the Selection Board not be in a position to sign PSC Declaration Form 8, he/she should immediately notify the respective authorities to this effect.

Any of these parameters may only be waived by the PSC.

Selection Boards are not to be subject to direction from any person or authority except the PSC with respect to the assessment of candidates.

2.3 After the closing date for receipt of applications

Upon expiry of the two (2) working days allowed for the submission of incorrect/incomplete/missing documents, the HR of the receiving Ministry/Department is to give access on the Government Recruitment Portal to the Selection Board to the applications and related documents, and is to furnish the Selection Board with:

- i. the schedules of applications referred to at section 2.1;
- ii. the application forms in the case of applications submitted through e-mail, by post or delivered by hand, and

- iii. a target date for submission of the Selection Board’s report (the Board is to be informed that it is to hold its first meeting by not later than five (5) working days from the closing date of the call and that the report is to be submitted within two (2) months from the date of the first meeting).

If any member of the Board cannot meet the given dead-line, s/he should inform the authorities upfront within two working days of appointment, and ask to be relieved of the duties of the Board. Otherwise, the appointment stands.

The Selection Board is responsible to carry out the tasks listed at points 8 - 13 in the SOP concerning “Timeframes for Selection Process” available at Appendix 2. Each member of the Selection Board is required to sign PSC Declaration Form 6 regarding Conflict of Interest & Non-Discrimination – available for download from the website of the People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate - before starting the selection process, declaring that:

- i. he/she is not related to any candidate by consanguinity or affinity to the fourth degree inclusive (details are found in the Annex to the Declaration);
- ii. he/she was not a tutor or curator of any candidate in terms of the Civil Code;
- iii. his/her non work-related activities, including but not limited to, any participation in political activities, do not place him/her in a conflict of interest as a Chairperson/Member of the Selection Board;
- iv. in determining the eligibility of and in assessing candidates, he/she shall not discriminate in any manner or on any basis including race, place of origin, nationality, skin colour, political opinions, creed, sex, sexual orientation, expression or gender identity, civil status, mental or physical well-being and age; and
- v. the whole proceedings of the Board are confidential.

Should the Chairperson or any of the Members of the Selection Board not be in a position to sign PSC Declaration Form 6 – “Conflict of Interest & Non-Discrimination” mentioned above, he/she should immediately notify the respective authorities to this effect.

To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, public officers appointed on selection boards are to refrain from making letters of reference in favour of applicants for the call for applications under consideration. The Selection Board shall consider only those letters of reference which are drawn up specifically for the call for applications in question. Furthermore, the Board is to keep in mind that a maximum of three (3) letters of reference may be submitted by candidates with their application. One (1) letter of reference should be drawn up by the applicant’s current supervisor (unless s/he is sitting on the Selection Board) if s/he has been supervising the officer for at least one year or, if this is not possible, the most recent supervisor with whom the candidate has served for a minimum of one year; and the supervisor making the reference must hold a post/position at Scale 5 or higher.

2.4 Confidentiality

Members of the Selection Board are subject to the restriction on disclosure of information laid down in the Public Service Commission Regulations. This means that no member of the Selection Board may divulge the report or proceedings of the board to any other person, whether a public officer or not.

Members of Selection Boards are to refrain from giving any information concerning the selection process or the result to candidates, other persons, or institutions.

2.5 Equality of opportunity

Selection Boards must not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender or family responsibilities or vulnerabilities, and are to ensure equality of opportunity during the selection process. In determining the eligibility of and in assessing candidates, the Selection Board should avoid any form of discriminatory treatment as defined in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452 of the Laws of Malta) and subsidiary legislation (Equal Treatment in Employment Regulations - SL 452.95), as may apply from time to time, as well as the Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap. 456 of the Laws of Malta) and the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (Cap. 540 of the Laws of Malta). Selection Boards are also to observe subparagraph (a) of clause 20 of the Code of Ethics for Public Employees and Board Members, which states that they shall not discriminate in any manner or on any basis including race, place of origin, nationality, skin colour, political opinions, creed, sex, sexual orientation, expression or gender identity, civil status, mental or physical well-being.

In addition, the Selection Board should adhere to the following guidelines during the interviews:-

- i. All applications should be processed in exactly the same way.
- ii. Persons should be assessed according to their personal capability and competence to carry out a given job.
- iii. Questions asked during interviews should relate to the requirements of the job.
- iv. Questions regarding gender, family responsibilities, marital status and pregnancy/potential pregnancy, or any other discriminatory questions, are not to be asked.
- v. No account should be taken of sex/sexual orientation, racial/ethnic origin, disability, age, religion/religious belief, political opinion or membership in a trade union/employers' association.
- vi. In the case of promotion, care should be taken to consider favourably the non-formal qualifications arising from general experience and differing career patterns of candidates.

2.6 Screening of candidates according to eligibility

Responsibility for determining whether or not candidates met the eligibility requirements with the Selection Board Subject to sections 2.9 and 2.10, only candidates who meet the eligibility requirements set out in the call for applications may undergo the selection process. Chairpersons and Members of the Selection Board are required to sign PSC Declaration Form No 7 regarding the "Eligibility of Candidates" (available for download from the website of the People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate) which is to be submitted together with the report of the Selection Board. The Selection Board has no authority to deviate from, or make exceptions to, the requirements set out in the call for applications.

Any difficulty in determining whether a degree, diploma or certificate presented with an application is comparable to the level of the qualification required for eligibility purposes is to be referred to the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC). The MQRIC will not, however, enter into the merits of whether a comparable qualification (in terms of level) is appropriate in terms of subject matter or content. This should be determined by the Board. In cases of difficulty, the

Selection Board should request candidates to submit a transcript of their qualification and/or other applicable documentation, to be in a position to determine eligibility or otherwise.

The eligibility of applicants who are public officers, insofar as their grade/scale is concerned, is strictly determined in accordance with the Service and Leave Record Form (GP 47) issued by the employing department and uploaded as an attachment onto the respective candidate's application on the Admin Recruitment Portal by the HR Unit of the ministry/department issuing the call for applications. The following guidelines are to be strictly observed when drawing up the GP47: -

- i. The GP47 is to be filled in accurately and in respect of public officers only;
- ii. Only appointments made to Public Service posts/positions are to be included in the GP47. Hence, in the case of public officers detailed with a Public Sector entity, appointments to posts/positions with the entity are not to be included in the GP47;
- iii. When a GP47 needs to be drawn up in respect of a detailed public officer, this is to be done by the parent Department;
- iv. Persons who are solely employees of the Public Sector are, in no instance, to be issued with a GP47;
- v. The GP47 should indicate, under the 'Remarks' column, whether the officer is confirmed or not in his/her current appointment, and
- vi. The GP47 should be signed by an officer in the department in a grade/position in scale 10 or above, whose name is to be clearly shown and identifiable.

2.7 Interpretation of eligibility requirements – service in the grade, experience in relevant area, experience in a management position

The eligibility requirements in a call for applications may specify a certain number of years of service in a grade or experience in a relevant area. Service in the grade means service in a particular grade in the Public Service, starting from each applicant's date of appointment to that grade. On the other hand, experience in a relevant area may include experience in both private and public sectors, locally and abroad.

Where the eligibility requirements in a call for applications specify a certain number of years of service in a grade or experience in a relevant area, Selection Boards should bear in mind the following with respect to serving public officers:

- i. service in the grade is reckoned in accordance with the respective PSMC provisions;
- ii. the amount of unpaid leave should, for this purpose, be counted in calendar terms according to the start and end dates of each period of unpaid leave, not on the basis of the number of working days granted and,
- iii. in accordance with the respective PSMC provisions, the first twelve months of service on reduced hours count in full as service in the grade, whereas subsequent periods count pro rata.

Where the eligibility requirements include a certain number of years of experience in a relevant area, Selection Boards should bear in mind the PSMC provisions regarding breaks in experience due to maternity leave, sick leave on full or half pay, or other paid or unpaid leave, whether on grounds of public policy or not, to be included in candidates' experience, provided that the total period of absence so included amounts to not more than one year or ten per cent of the relevant experience required by the call, whichever is lower.

Selection Boards are to keep in mind that previous accredited experience, whether gained within the Public Service, or with a local/foreign employer, is reckonable for the purpose of satisfying eligibility criteria when a person is applying for a post or position in the Public Service and is also to be taken into consideration when awarding marks during the selection process.

The eligibility requirements sometimes include a number of years' experience in a "management position". A "management position" is one which entails involvement in the development and management of people and policies within an organisation to reach optimal efficiency and output. The holder of a management position in the Public Service: -

- May be required to head a Unit within a department or ministry;
- Must be familiar with pertinent legislation and responsible for the implementation of legislation and directives relating to the Unit's jurisdiction;
- Represents top management in seminars/meetings/court hearings, institutions of oversight, etc;
- Assists in the implementation of policy and management directives;
- Assists in the organization and management of a Department or Ministry;
- Provides advice to top management regarding special areas of expertise/experience;
- Assists in the formulation of HR, Financial and Departmental Plans;
- Ensures the provision of a reliable, accurate and timely service in the daily operations of the Unit/Section; and
- Ensures an even distribution of tasks according to roles, responsibilities and competences.

2.8 Interpretation of the call for applications

In instances where the Selection Board encounters difficulty in interpreting the provisions of the call for applications due to lack of clarity or conflicts between the English and Maltese versions or provisions which are in conflict with each other, it is the Maltese version which shall prevail. If the Selection Board considers that the Maltese text is incorrect, it shall seek the advice of the PSC.

The PSC may direct that a correction to the call for applications be published, or that the call be withdrawn altogether, and a fresh call be issued.

The PSC may also direct that a call for applications be corrected or withdrawn if, in its opinion, any of the provisions thereof are manifestly unfair or in breach of the principle of merit.

2.9 Waiver of eligibility requirements in the case of disabled applicants

The general provisions pertaining to calls for applications, to which reference is usually made in each call, permit applicants who are registered as disabled to request reasonable accommodation on account of their disability. This means that disabled applicants who would otherwise be ineligible may seek waivers of specific eligibility requirements.

Requests for reasonable accommodation which are received by Selection Boards should be referred to the PSC for consideration, in terms of the relevant provisions of the PSMC.

2.10 Waiver of eligibility requirements due to administrative errors

If, as a result of an administrative error or delay by a public body, applicants may have been unable to obtain a certificate, licence, warrant or registration by the closing date of the call for applications (even though they were entitled to it), it is the Commission's policy that applicants should not be penalised for such administrative delays or errors over which the applicants had no control. Such cases of apparent ineligibility as a result of administrative delays or errors should be referred to the PSC for a ruling.

2.11 Conduct certificates

External applicants for vacancies in the Public Service are normally required to present a certificate of conduct issued by a competent authority as evidence that their conduct is appropriate to the post applied for. Thus, an applicant with a criminal record is not automatically disqualified from employment in the Public Service.

In terms of the Conduct Certificates Ordinance (Cap. 77 of the Laws of Malta), there are two types of conduct certificates:

Form A – a declaration to the effect that the person mentioned in the certificate is of good conduct; and

Form B – a declaration containing an indication of the convictions against the person mentioned in the certificate by any court of law, whether in Malta or abroad, and recordable in terms of the said Ordinance.

Selection Boards should be guided by the respective provisions of the Public Service Management Code when determining applicants' eligibility with regard to conduct on the basis of the record of conduct produced by applicants.

There may be instances when the Selection Board has reason to believe that an applicant, irrespective of whether s/he submitted a Form A or Form B Conduct Certificate, should produce a complete record of criminal convictions (*fedina penali*)². In such cases, the Selection Board is to request the applicant concerned to produce the complete record of criminal convictions (*fedina penali*), on the basis of which the Selection Board shall determine whether the applicant should be considered for the post / position. An applicant who fails to produce the *fedina penali* within a stipulated timeframe is to be considered ineligible.

The Selection Board shall state its decisions in writing which should later be attached to the report under confidential cover.

2.12 Informing applicants of their ineligibility

Ineligible applicants are to be informed accordingly by the Selection Board, preferably through e-mail (vide guidelines outlined at 2.15), giving the reason that justifies their decision and quoting the relevant paragraph in the call for application. These applicants shall have the opportunity to contest the decision of the Selection Board, with regard to their ineligibility, by submitting representations to the PSC within five (5) working days from the date of notification, giving justified reasons.

² A candidate who submits a Form A Conduct Certificate may still have a criminal record, since certain convictions are erased from the Certificate after a number of years (as per 2nd Schedule of the Ordinance). The same applies to a Form B Conduct Certificate, which is not a complete record since, likewise, it does not include any convictions which have been erased as per 2nd Schedule.

2.13 Notification of interviews

Selection Boards are to ensure that candidates are made aware in good time (minimum one week) of the date of their test and / or interview, as well as of any other non-qualifying assessment methods as outlined in 1.5, and of the selection criteria (but not the weightings) to be adopted as stated in 3.2, by observing the methods outlined in 2.15 below.

Selection Boards are under no obligation to provide an alternative date for the interview when a candidate is unable to attend on the scheduled date. However, every effort should be made to grant eligible candidates the opportunity of an interview, particularly in genuine cases of unavailability.

If an applicant is unable to physically attend for an interview, the Selection Board may carry out the interview by video-conference. Conducting interviews over the telephone, however, is not permissible.

2.14 Informing applicants that they are considered as having renounced their application on account of having taken up another appointment

If the Selection Board is alerted that a particular candidate has received another appointment since the date of application (either by the HR Unit of the Department or by the candidate himself/herself during the interview), the following procedures are to be observed:-

- i. If the interview has not been scheduled yet, the Selection Board shall inform the candidate in writing that s/he will not be called for an interview, stating the reason that the application in question is considered as renounced in view that the candidate has taken up another appointment;
- ii. If the interview has been scheduled but not carried out yet, the Selection Board shall inform the candidate in writing not to attend for the interview, stating the reason at (i) above;
- iii. If the candidate informs the Selection Board that there was a change in the status of his/her appointment from the date of submission of application, the Selection Board is to likewise inform the candidate that the application is considered as renounced and is not to carry out the interview;
- iv. If the interview has been carried out but the result not yet published, the Selection Board shall inform the candidate that s/he will not feature in the published result, stating the reason at (i) above.

2.15 Communicating with applicants

Communicating with applicants by means of the “recorded delivery” facility of Malta Post plc provides tangible proof that the candidate concerned has been notified, and the notification delivered, at the address given in the application by the candidate. This method also provides an official notification date in cases where time limits are applicable.

Applicants who supply an e-mail address may be contacted by e-mail. However, Selection Boards should bear in mind that e-mails may sometimes fail to be delivered or may be intercepted as spam by the recipient’s e-mail service provider. There have been instances where candidates did not receive the notification of their interview date for this reason. Selection Boards who communicate with candidates by e-mail should therefore include in each e-mail a request to the candidate to acknowledge receipt, and to follow up the notification by phone or other means in cases where candidates fail to acknowledge receipt.

2.16 Record-keeping

The authorities shall ensure that a complete “post/position” file is kept, which shall include:

- i. the requisite approval for the recruitment or filling of the vacancy;
- ii. a record of any advertisement/s made;
- iii. details on the composition of the Selection Board;
- iv. details on the assessment method, criteria and weightings used;
- v. a record of the applications received, and the acknowledgements sent to applicants;
- vi. the dossier compiled by the Chairperson of the Selection Board. The dossier should be a complete record of the selection process and should include a copy of the call for applications, the original applications received (the respective provisions of the PSMC regarding “Retention Policy for HR Documents” apply), copies of the notices sent to applicants, a copy of the official job description, the approved assessment method, selection criteria, sub-criteria and weightings used, and all other documents and copies of correspondence connected with the selection process; and,
- vii. the Selection Board report, details on the drawing up of which are found at section 4.2.

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3. Selection criteria, Sub-criteria and weightings

3.1 Power to set the selection criteria and weightings

Subject to what is stated in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 hereunder, the authorities shall also determine, concurrently with the issue of the call for applications, the selection criteria and weightings to be applied in assessing candidates in a particular selection process, according to the nature of the particular specialisation of the vacancy to be filled.

3.2 Selection criteria, sub-criteria and weightings

Semi-standard criteria and weightings

Appendices 3.1 – 3.5 are intended to serve as guidelines in the setting up of selection criteria, sub-criteria and weightings applicable to selection processes for posts/positions in the Public Service.

Further criteria and sub-criteria may be added where these are justified by the post/position to be filled. If the Selection Board feels that a new criterion should be included or that a criterion ought to be omitted (e.g. qualifications) or that the weighting should be changed, it should seek the authorities' approval, giving the respective justification. In any case, subjective criteria should not be given a high weighting.

This delegation of power to the authorities to approve any deviations from the guidelines at Appendices 3.1 – 3.5 does not waive any direction given by the Commission prior to or after the introduction of the delegation. Such direction shall remain effective and overrides any other conflicting provision in this Manual.

When determining the weighting for each criterion, the following points should be kept in mind:

- i. Experience is of limited value in basic entry posts which are open to school leavers, e.g. that of Clerk. Placing weight on experience may offer undue advantage to candidates with prior work experience at the expense of others who may be brighter or better qualified. In such cases, placing weight on qualifications rather than experience, is usually a better option.
- ii. On the other hand, qualifications become progressively less important as one approaches senior management level, particularly where internal calls for applications are concerned. At this level, e.g. scale 7 and higher, weight should be placed on experience as opposed to qualifications. An assessment of candidates' track record (initiatives, personal achievements) is particularly important at this level. This applies to management posts rather than posts involving the application of specialist professional expertise, where possession of advanced qualifications may be important.

The final selection criteria (but not the weightings) to be adopted in a selection process should be distributed to all candidates, as an attachment to the letter or e-mail notifying candidates to attend an interview.

3.3 Sub-criteria

General provisions

Prior to the commencement of the actual assessment of candidates, the Selection Board is required to draw up sub-criteria for every selection criterion approved by the authorities. The Selection Board is required to submit the sub-criteria for the information of the authorities before conducting the selection process and is to include a statement of the sub-criteria in its report. The authorities must signify that the Selection Board may proceed with the interviews.

Sub-criteria serve to define the selection criteria and indicate how marks will be allocated under each criterion. Therefore, vague sub-criteria such as “aptitude” should be avoided. Similarly, the criterion “personal qualities” should not include “personality” as a sub-criterion, since this merely restates the criterion without defining it or breaking it down.

Sub-criteria such as “hobbies”, “outside interests” or “voluntary work” should also be avoided. The selection criteria and sub-criteria for a post should refer to the specific qualities required for the post. If a Selection Board wishes to gauge candidates’ initiative, it can do so directly by including “initiative” as a sub-criterion under an appropriate selection criterion.

Experience

No marks are to be awarded for the number of years’ experience/service which is a prerequisite for the vacancy

Selection Boards may choose to award marks on the basis of the duration of applicants’ relevant experience, or on the basis of applicants’ record of achievements, or both. Selection Boards are not obliged to award marks mechanically on the basis of so many marks per year of experience.

When drawing up sub-criteria relating to relevant experience, Selection Boards should ensure that they do not inadvertently penalise candidates who have spent their entire career performing work directly related to the vacancy to be filled. For example, the criteria for the post of Foreman (Restoration) might include 30 marks for relevant experience. The Selection Board should not break these down into 20 marks for experience in restoration works and 10 marks for experience in other types of works as this would put candidates who have spent their entire career in restoration at a disadvantage, since they would not be entitled to any of the 10 marks set aside for experience in other types of works.

As an alternative, one could either limit the award of marks to experience in restoration works (also giving marks for, say, supervisory experience regardless of the sector) or else award marks generally for experience in works, with additional marks given concurrently for experience in restoration. Both options would avoid penalising applicants who have served exclusively in restoration.

Selection Boards should not differentiate between experience in the Public Service (or any other employer) and experience elsewhere. Neither should Selection Boards differentiate between experience in Malta and experience in other countries. Relevant functional areas should be identified as indicated above, and marks should be awarded for experience in those areas regardless of who the employer was or which country the experience was obtained in.

Position-related requirements

Selection Boards should consider what candidates should know in order to have a better chance of performing the duties of the job successfully. Sub-criteria under this criterion should test candidates' grasp of the material covered in any qualifications required for eligibility purposes, or to assess their knowledge of subject matter that is not covered by such qualifications (e.g. relevant legislation or official policy documents).

This criterion should be assessed on the basis of interview questions or other supplementary selection mechanisms, rather than through the award of marks for possession of qualifications.

Qualifications

No marks are to be awarded for qualifications which are a prerequisite for the vacancy, as indicated in the relevant call for applications. In such cases, marks may be awarded for the ranking obtained in the relative degree or other qualification. However, marks given for ranking should not exceed 25 per cent of the total mark for the "qualifications" criterion. Where marks are allocated for the classification of qualifications and the Selection Board encounters a difficulty to assess the qualifications presented, candidates are to be requested to submit a transcript of their qualification, unless this requirement was already stipulated in the call for applications.

Where an applicant satisfies more than one of the eligibility criteria in terms of qualifications, no marks are to be awarded in respect of the qualification on which the applicant is considered as being eligible. Marks are however to be awarded for the other qualification. Furthermore, where a call for applications includes alternative eligibility requirements, and an applicant satisfies more than one such requirement, the Selection Board should adjudge the applicant as qualifying under the requirement that would not unnecessarily deprive the applicant of marks for the higher qualification.

Marks for additional qualifications may be only be awarded for qualifications attained by the closing date of the call for applications. A candidate who can provide evidence that the necessary ECTS were attained by such date may be awarded marks accordingly, i.e. the Selection Board could opt to give one of the lower marks if substantiated by an available transcript.

The weighting for MQF level 7 should be graded to differentiate between different types of qualifications, namely Post Graduate Certificate, Post Graduate Diploma and Master's Degree.

No additional marks should be awarded for qualifications which are directly linked to the attainment of a higher qualification. By way of example, a candidate who is in possession of a diploma, a first degree and a master's degree, all in the field of information technology, should only be awarded marks for the highest qualification.

Furthermore, where a candidate who submits an application on the basis of a qualification which is at a higher level than that required in the eligibility criteria, but is not in possession of the qualification at the required level, s/he is to be considered eligible, provided that the candidate meets the other applicable requirements of the call including those specifying the subject matter of the required qualifications. Such cases may include, for example, instances where the eligibility requirement stipulated in the call for applications is for a First Degree in a particular field, whilst the candidate, although not in possession of the required qualification, is in possession of a Masters'

Degree in the same field. In such cases, no marks are to be awarded for the higher qualification on the basis of which the candidate has been considered to satisfy the eligibility criteria.

Without prejudice to the foregoing, marks for qualifications are to be awarded only for the highest additional qualification held by the candidate in accordance with the pre-determined sub-criteria as established by the Selection Board, unless otherwise approved by authorities, prior to the start of the interviews.

Selection Boards should award marks only for qualifications that would enable applicants to better perform the duties of the job. This does not exclude the award of marks for general qualifications, e.g. O levels or A levels regardless of subject, if the Selection Board feels that candidates who have attained such a level of education would be better able to perform the duties of the job.

Furthermore, a candidate who satisfies eligibility on the strength of a qualification at a particular level, who, in addition, presents a qualification at a lower level (e.g. eligibility requirement is a Master's Degree and candidate presents also a First Degree / Higher Diploma / Diploma) but in a pertinent field, should be given additional marks for such a qualification as long as it was not used to enable the candidate to enrol for the required higher qualification.

Under this criterion, marks may be set aside for in-service training and/or other relevant short courses. As a general rule, however, short courses – particularly short courses which are not assessed (award of certificates of attendance only) – should not be put at the same level as formal education.

3.4 Adjusting the maximum mark

While retaining the allocation of marks for the selection criteria in the same proportion as that approved by the authorities, Selection Boards should automatically increase the marking range as necessary to avoid ties.

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4 Assessing candidates and preparing the selection board report³

4.1 Assessment of candidates

- i. The interview should be structured to ensure that it addresses all the criteria and subcriteria, and targets the duties related to the post.
- ii. Selection Boards should assess candidates solely on the basis of the selection criteria and sub-criteria. A Selection Board should not deviate from the established criteria and sub-criteria by taking into consideration extraneous factors, such as candidates' utilisation of sick leave, a candidate's disciplinary record, or working conditions such as working on reduced hours or teleworking.

Any legitimate considerations on counts (i) and (ii) above should be raised by the authorities with the PSC after the conclusion of the selection process, for possible consideration under regulation 20 of the PSC Regulations.

- iii. Selection Boards must not discriminate on any grounds and are to ensure equality of opportunity (vide Section 2.5).
- iv. Selection Boards are required to keep notes on each candidate's performance during the interview as well as workings relating to the selection process. Selection Boards should be in a position to comment on any points made by applicants if petitions are submitted to the Public Service Commission and/or complaints are filed with the Ombudsman. Selection Board members who are not serving public officers are to place their notes in a sealed envelope which should be clearly marked to indicate the respective selection process. The sealed envelope is to be handed to the Chairperson of the Selection Board when the report has been compiled and submitted, and the Chairperson is to make arrangements for its appropriate filing. The retention period for such notes and workings is to be of the same duration as the validity period of the respective result unless:
 - a. a petition connected with the particular call for applications has been filed with the Public Service Commission and/or a complaint has been filed with the Ombudsman in relation to the call for applications, in which cases the notes should be kept for a period of two years from the date of publication of the result;
 - b. the Public Service Commission directs the Selection Board to retain its notes for a longer period, or
 - c. the vacancy being filled is co-financed from EU funds, in which case the retention period should be the same as the retention period for application forms, as stipulated in the regulations governing the relative EU programme for which the particular call for applications is issued.
- v. The award of fractions of a mark in the final result is not allowed.
- vi. Cases such as those resulting in ties, or where the difference in ranking order is that of one/two marks, or borderline failures, require specific scrutiny.

³ The timeframes applicable to the procedures described in this Section are also found in Appendix 2 entitled Standard Operating Procedures – Timeframes for the Selection Process, which is a step-by-step guide for officers responsible for HR matters and for officers/persons appointed on Selection Boards.

4.2 The Selection Board report

- i. Before compiling the report, the Selection Board should inform the PSC of the date when applicants were notified of their ineligibility in accordance with the methods outlined in 2.15. The Board should enquire whether any representations contesting ineligibility were submitted to the PSC by applicants within the established timeframe of five working days and whether there are any pending representations by ineligible applicants for the consideration of the Commission. Only upon confirmation from the Commission that there were no representations / there are no pending representations can the Selection Board proceed to compile and finalise the report.
- ii. The Selection Board report should account for the total number of applicants, indicating:
 - how many were found ineligible (certifying that they were notified by the means outlined in 2.15 of the reason for their ineligibility, and informed of their right to submit representations to the PSC within 5 working days);
 - how many (if any) withdrew their application or failed to attend the interview;
 - how many (if any) renounced to their application on account of having taken up another appointment;
 - if any applicants were assessed provisionally due to the fact that they were still awaiting MQRIC equivalence of their qualification/s (certifying that such applicants were informed that (1) they were assessed provisionally, (2) should the equivalence report be in the negative or not presented within four (4) months from the closing date of the call for applications, then they will be disqualified from the selection process and (3) that subject to availability of vacancies, appointment cannot be made before the positive equivalence report is received from MQRIC);
 - a statement that the eligible applicants were notified by the means outlined in 2.15 of their interview date and venue.
- iii. If the Selection Board feels that considerations which may be relevant to the suitability of a candidate for the post need to be brought to the attention of the authorities, such as factors stated in 4.1(ii) above, it should raise the issue in its report and alert the authorities, who shall take up the issue with the PSC, if necessary. Any considerations regarding conduct should be included in a sealed envelope.
- iv. The report should include details of due scrutiny exercised by Selection Boards in cases of ties and borderline failures.
- v. The order of merit amongst candidates who obtain the same marks, is to be determined as follows:-
 - a. if two (2) candidates are appointed from outside the service, the elder candidate takes precedence (if they have the same date of birth, precedence is determined by ballot);
 - b. if one of the two candidates is currently in the public service and the other is not, the serving officer takes precedence;
 - c. if two candidates are public officers:
 - the candidate with the higher position/grade takes precedence;
 - if both candidates are in the same, or equivalent, position/grade, the candidate with the earlier date of appointment takes precedence;
 - if both candidates are in the same position/grade and have the same date of appointment, the senior of the two (2) candidates in his/her present appointment will have precedence;
 - if both candidates are in an equivalent position/grade and have the same date of appointment, the candidate with the earlier date of appointment in the previous

position/grade takes precedence, the same criteria being applied to establish such precedence.

- vi. The following documents should be attached to the Selection Board report:
 - the signed PSC Declaration Forms 6, 7 and 8 regarding Conflict of Interest & Non-Discrimination, Eligibility of Candidates and Political/Trade Union Activities respectively;
 - a list of all applicants;
 - a statement setting out the sub-criteria and weightings set by the Selection Board;
 - an assessment sheet setting out the marks allotted to each candidate under each criterion and sub-criterion. The assessment sheet should account only for candidates who underwent assessment, i.e. successful and failed candidates, and candidates who underwent assessment and subsequently withdrew their application should not be included therein. The names are to be listed in the sequence of the application number. Under the "Remarks" column, the order of merit should be included and failures are to be denoted by "F". The assessment sheet should include an indication of any assessment/s carried out on a provisional basis pending presentation of MQRIC equivalence;
 - two copies of the result sheet (order of merit) showing the set maximum mark and pass mark, the names and ID numbers of eligible, interviewed candidates in order of merit, and the final mark given. In the case of candidates who fail to obtain a pass mark, the name is to be omitted and the letter "F" is to be inserted in the "Order of Merit" column. The result sheet should include only successful and failed candidates. Each copy of the result sheet is to have the full name and signature of the Chairperson and each member of the Selection Board on each page;
 - copies of letter/s of withdrawal from candidates and notification/s of renouncement (if applicable);
 - the statement received from the Public Service Commission confirming that no representations by ineligible applicants were received / there are no pending representations by ineligible applicants on the date of the Selection Board report, as applicable;
 - any other documents under confidential cover.
- vii. The report and all appendices thereto should be in print form and not handwritten. For the sake of uniformity, Selection Boards are to submit their printed result sheets in portrait orientation according to the standard digital format that could be downloaded from the website of the People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate. A Specimen Selection Board Report and Assessment Sheet are also available for download. Chairpersons of Selection Boards will be held accountable for any delays in the particular selection process as a result of their not complying with this instruction.
- viii. The report should be signed by all the members of the Board and each page of the report is to be endorsed by every member of the Selection Board, unless a member of the Selection Board dissents from the recommendations made by the Board, in which case s/he should state his or her reasons and views in a separate report.
- ix. When the Selection Board is satisfied that the report meets all the requirements, it should forward its report to the authorities where the vacancy exists, for publication of the results.
- x. In cases where a Selection Board is chaired by the Permanent Secretary, the Selection Board shall forward its report to the PPS who shall endorse it for publication purposes.

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5 Appointment Procedure under delegated authority⁴

5.1 Publication of the result

The authorities shall carefully examine the report of the Selection Board to ensure that there are no apparent mistakes or omissions in the report. The report should be scrupulously checked including, but not limited, to the following:-

- All candidates should be accounted for in the report;
- The criteria and sub-criteria appearing on the Assessment Sheet should conform to those appearing on the statement of sub-criteria, which statement also forms part of the report;
- It must be ensured that the Selection Board was consistent when awarding marks for qualifications and experience, as initially agreed upon in the statement of sub-criteria;
- Only candidates who were actually assessed should appear in the result;
- The marks awarded to each candidate in the result sheet tally with the overall marks awarded to the respective candidate in the assessment sheet;
- The result should clearly indicate the minimum pass mark and, in the case of candidates who failed to obtain a pass mark, only their ID number should show in the result, and
- All pertinent documentation and forms are annexed to the report and that such documentation is duly compiled and signed by all the members of the Selection Board.

If any errors or omissions are noted, the report should be referred back to the Selection Board for the necessary corrections. Once the authorities are satisfied that the Selection Board report meets all established requirements, the result shall be published or issued, as applicable. Publication/issue of the result is to be made within ten (10) working days from when the Selection Board submits its report.

In the case of posts/positions below salary scale 5, the result shall be immediately displayed on a notice board, accessible to the public, in the respective Ministry and department and on the notice boards in all the other offices, branches or institutions of the department where the vacancies exist. A note should be posted on the notice board stating that no photos of results may be taken.

On the same day, a notification of the publication of the result is to appear on the Ministry's / department's website. Notification of publication of the result is to be retained on the respective Ministry's webpage for one week (a **Publication of Results** page is to be created under the Resources section to ensure conformity and standardisation). A printed copy of the notification, clearly indicating the date when it was uploaded, is to be kept in the respective file. Results are

⁴ The timeframes applicable to the procedures described in this Section are also found in Appendix 2 entitled Standard Operating Procedures – Timeframes for the Selection Process, which is a step-by- step guide for officers responsible for HR matters and for officers/persons appointed on Selection Boards

normally displayed for one week from the date of publication. After this period, results should nonetheless be available for viewing upon request.

Concurrently, an SMS alert is to be sent to all candidates who underwent the selection process and who submitted a mobile phone number (and an email address) with their application. The SMS alert (maximum of 160 characters) is to be limited to informing the candidates that the result for the particular vacancy has been published and informing them of all the places where the result may be viewed. Towards this end, the authorities shall ensure that: -

- i. A list, in Excel format, is extracted from the published result comprising the name and mobile number (and email address) of those candidates, both successful and unsuccessful, who underwent selection. In addition to the mobile number (and email address) of successful and unsuccessful candidates, the list should also include the generic “no reply” email address of the Public Service Commission resultsnotification.psc@gov.mt, in order to assist the Commission in keeping track of published results and concluded selection processes.
- ii. Arrangements with the Ministry’s Chief Information Officer have been made in order to obtain the access for the system that will make possible the issue of SMS alerts / email notification to the candidates on the list at (i) above.

In the case of posts/positions in salary scale 5 or higher, the result will not be published but will be sent to the candidates by e-mail at the e-mail address provided by candidates on their application form.

A breakdown of the result for each criterion and sub-criterion is to be given by the authorities, or his/her delegate, only at the specific request of a candidate and only in respect of his/her own performance during the interview.

Candidates are allowed ten (10) working days as stipulated in 6.1 below to submit a petition, contesting the result. A revised result, due to a correction in the original result, does not give grounds for the submission of fresh petitions.

5.2 Appointment of successful candidates

Scenario 1

When the number of successful candidates is higher than the number of immediate vacancies and/or the result includes unsuccessful candidates, the following procedure is to be followed:-

- i. Appointments may only be made after the 10 working days allowed for the submission of petitions expire, unless clearance is obtained from the PSC to proceed with appointments on grounds of public interest;
- ii. When the 10 working days allowed for the submission of petitions expire, the authorities shall enquire in writing with the PSC whether the ministry concerned may proceed with the making of appointments;
- iii. Upon a reply by the PSC that no petitions were received, and the authorities are in agreement with the Selection Board report, the authorities shall proceed to make appointments - in preparing for the issue of letters of appointment, the authorities should keep in mind whether any vacancies need to be reserved for applicants who might still be awaiting the MQRIC equivalence report;

- iv. If any petitions are submitted to the PSC, a number of vacancies equal to the number of petitions received should be held open until the petitions are resolved, unless clearance is obtained from the PSC to proceed with the appointments owing to urgency attached to the filling of vacancies, and
- v. In the event that a petition is upheld, and this leads to an additional appointment by way of redress, the authorities should refer to the People & Standards Division with respect to financial arrangements.

Scenario 2

When the number of successful candidates is equal to or less than the number of immediate vacancies and the result does not include any unsuccessful candidates, the Authorities may proceed with the appointments before the lapse of the ten-working day period allowed for the submission of petitions, without seeking PSC clearance. This delegation of authority:-

- i. is without prejudice to the right of any candidate to submit a petition within the ten-working day petition period, and
- ii. is subject that a candidate's standing on the merit list does not impinge on the manner in which the postings from the particular selection process are made.

If for any reason, as stipulated in regulation 20, the authorities are of the opinion that a successful candidate, according to the order of merit recommended by the Selection Board, should not be appointed, they shall submit the matter together with all the relevant documentation, for consideration of the Public Service Commission in terms of the same sub-regulation.

The Public Service Commission, after giving the candidate concerned the opportunity to submit representations and considering the matter, shall direct the authorities on how to proceed and they shall proceed accordingly.

Before they are appointed, selected candidates (internal and external) should be required to sign a declaration (as per specimen available for download from the website of the People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate) stating that they have no pending criminal case, and have no convictions other than as stated in their application. Public officers should also declare that they have no pending disciplinary cases and have not been found guilty of any disciplinary offences other than those in their GP47.

If, on the basis of the above declaration, the authorities are of the opinion that a successful candidate should produce the complete record of criminal convictions (fedina penali), then the latter is to be asked to provide the complete record himself/herself. If, following its production, the respective Permanent Secretary considers that the appointment should not be proceeded with, then the applicant is informed accordingly, given back his/her record of criminal convictions, and informed of his/her right to appeal with the Public Service Commission.

Likewise, if any pending disciplinary cases/disciplinary offences emerge as per above declaration, and the respective Permanent Secretary considers that the appointment should not be proceeded with, then the applicant is informed accordingly, and informed of his/her right to appeal with the Public Service Commission. Hence, the Commission remains distant from the case until appeal stage.

Officers whose appointment to a higher grade has been approved, but who, prior to receiving their letter of appointment are placed on precautionary suspension, will have the issue of their letter of appointment also suspended. Issue of the letter of appointment is kept in abeyance until a decision is reached by the Public Service Commission for the lifting or otherwise of the precautionary suspension imposed. Suspension of the issue of the letter of appointment is approved by the Prime Minister acting on the recommendation of the Commission.

In addition, each candidate concerned is to be formally sent a standard letter, a specimen of which is available for download from the website of the People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate (Letter to Selected Candidate), through the means outlined in 2.15.

The candidate is asked to clearly indicate whether s/he will be accepting or refusing the appointment. If the candidate indicates that s/he will be accepting the appointment, s/he is to indicate when s/he will be in a position to take up the duties of the new post/position. If commencement of duties is not within one (1) week from the date of the letter, the candidate should give the reason, supported by the relevant documentary evidence, if applicable. Failure to reply within one (1) week from the date of the letter will be taken to mean that the appointment is being refused. A candidate who indicates that s/he will be accepting the appointment is also to indicate whether s/he has any other pending applications, and, if in the affirmative, state the post/position, Ministry/Department and date of respective call/s. The signed 'Letter to Selected Candidate', duly filled in by the appointee, is to be inserted in the relevant Personal File.

Acceptance of an **indefinite** appointment signifies that any pending applications within the Public Service are automatically considered renounced, unless the latter are applications for SAAC/ADAC positions or applications for a definite position, whilst acceptance of a **definite** appointment signifies that any pending applications within the Public Service are automatically considered renounced unless the latter are applications for SAAC/ADAC positions.

For this reason, in those cases where the selected candidate indicates that s/he has other pending applications, the HR Unit of the appointing Department is to establish which of these has to be renounced and inform the HR Unit of the other Department/s concerned accordingly. The latter HR Unit/s is/are to ensure that any such indicated candidates are disqualified from their respective selection process/es and are to be guided as follows: -

- i. If the result has not been published yet, the HR Unit is to inform the respective Selection Board accordingly, and the Selection Board is to proceed as per Section 2.14;
- ii. If the result has been published, the HR Unit is to inform the successful candidate that s/he has lost the right to appointment as a result of the call for applications in question, giving the reason that the application in question is considered as renounced in view that the candidate has taken up another appointment. This is to be done irrespective of whether or not the successful candidate is in line for appointment, according to the order of merit.

Any appointment attained as a result of missing/false/misleading information will be revoked and the defaulting officer may be liable to disciplinary action.

Otherwise, appointments are to be made strictly in accordance with (i) the order of merit obtained in the published result and (ii) the number of approved vacancies.

The Permanent Secretary shall determine the effective date of appointment in the case of appointment to a substantive grade, and the letter of appointment shall be issued accordingly under his/her signature. In the absence of a Permanent Secretary, letters of appointment are to be signed by the Principal Permanent Secretary. In the case of appointment to a definite position, the date of appointment shall be the date when the appointee actually takes up the duties of the position. In any case, the date of appointment shall not be earlier than the date of publication or individual communication of the respective result.

Letters of appointment shall be issued both in the case of substantive posts, as well as positions of a definite duration. Specimen letters of appointment in respect of indefinite and definite appointments, as applicable, are available for download from the website of the People Resourcing & Compliance Directorate. When renewing a definite appointment, a fresh letter of appointment is to be issued, omitting reference to the probationary period since this would have already passed. Copies of the letter of appointment are to be sent to the Research & Personnel Systems Directorate within the People & Standards Division, the Gozo Salaries Section and the Auditor General.

An appointment is considered to have been formally approved upon signature of the respective letter of appointment by the Permanent Secretary, without prejudice to the possibility that the letter of appointment may specify a different effective date.

5.3 Validity period of the result

The validity period of a selection process shall be one year from the date of publication of the result, or the date the result is sent to candidates in the case of posts/positions in salary scale 5 or higher, unless otherwise stated in the call for applications. The result of the interview will serve to fill vacancies recurring in that particular post/position during the validity period. In cases where a revised result is issued, the validity period of the result nonetheless starts from the date of the original result.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding paragraph, the Public Service Commission may, if it deems it necessary and proper, authorise the extension of the validity period.

If, within the validity period of the result, a fresh call for applications is issued for the same post/position, any remaining candidates on the initial pass list who are not yet appointed will, during the validity period of the first call, take precedence over successful candidates from the second call.

5.4 Postponement of appointment within the validity period of the result

A delay in appointment to a substantive grade up to twelve (12) weeks from the date determined by the Permanent Secretary for a valid reason (e.g. contractual obligation to give a period of notice to the current employer or completion of a course of studies) may be allowed by the Permanent Secretary according to exigencies.

When a selected candidate requests a delay, which is approved by the Permanent Secretary, to honour a contractual obligation to give a notice period to the current employer, then the candidate should be additionally asked to:-

- i. indicate the duration of such notice period, and
- ii. provide proof within a period of one (1) week that s/he has given notice of termination of employment with the said employer.

Where no formal notice obligations apply, it is management prerogative to allow a "handing-over" period of reasonable duration.

When the Permanent Secretary approves a request for the delay of an appointment to a substantive grade, the candidate's order of merit in the respective selection exercise will be retained, the effective date of appointment will be the date determined by the Permanent Secretary as explained at 5.2 and the period of delay until the candidate takes up duties will be considered as leave without pay.

Requests by selected candidates for the postponement, in excess of twelve (12) weeks, of an appointment to a substantive grade to a date within the validity period of the result may be granted by, and at the discretion of, the Permanent Secretary, if justifiable reasons exist.

When such a request for the postponement of an appointment to a substantive grade is approved, the resultant date of appointment shall be the date when the officer actually commences the duties of the new grade, with due loss of seniority.

A selected candidate may also opt not to take up the appointment but to remain on the order of merit till the validity of the result.

When a request for the delay or the postponement of an appointment is not approved by the Permanent Secretary, or in instances when the candidate opts not to take up the appointment but to remain on the order of merit till the validity of the result, the candidate will retain his/her placing in the order of merit on the respective result, no vacancy is to be reserved in his/her regard and his/her eligibility will remain valid up to the validity period of the examination or Selection Board's Result. Every time that a vacancy subsequently occurs during the validity period, the Permanent Secretary shall, in the first instance, offer the candidate whose request for a delay/postponement had been refused or who had opted not to take up the appointment but to remain on the order of merit, the opportunity to take up appointment. When offering appointment to candidates in terms of this provision, the Permanent Secretary shall invariably act on the basis of the order of merit established in the respective result. If on the principle that vacancies need to be filled, a fresh call for applications is issued before the expiry of the result of the previous call for the same post/position, any remaining candidates on the initial order of merit not yet appointed will, during the validity period of the first call, take precedence over successful candidates from the second call.

The delegation of power to the Permanent Secretary to approve requests for the postponement of an appointment is subject to the proviso that no postponements of an appointment beyond the validity period of the Result should be made.

The above provisions are without prejudice to cases concerning appointees who, at the time of qualifying for an appointment, are on maternity leave, parental leave, paid / unpaid leave on grounds of public policy or any other form of paid leave. In such cases, appointees will be entitled to take up the appointment with effect from the date originally determined by the Permanent Secretary.

When offered an appointment, a candidate is informed about the possibility of seeking a delay or postponement or of opting not to take up the appointment but to remain on the order of merit till the validity of the result. If, notwithstanding, the candidate opts to refuse the appointment, s/he shall have no right to an appointment under the same call for applications, even if s/he subsequently changes his/her mind.

A candidate who resigns the post/position after taking up the relative duties shall likewise have no right for re-appointment under the same call for applications.

The above provisions are subject to the overriding principle that, for the duration of the validity period of the Selection Board result, a candidate's achieved order of merit is to be respected at all times under whatever circumstances.

06

6 Petitions by candidates on the selection process

6.1 Time limit for the submission of petitions by candidates

Petitions regarding a selection process are to reach the Executive Secretary, Public Service Commission within: -

- i. In the case of posts or positions in salary scale 6 or below, ten (10) working days from the date on which notification appears on the website of the respective Ministry/department stating that the result has been issued. Calls for applications should make it clear that candidates are to regularly check the respective website in order to be aware of the publication of the result. Failure to receive an SMS alert notifying the issue of the result does not constitute a justification for submitting a petition beyond the 10-working daytime limit;

Or

- ii. In the case of posts or positions in salary scale 5 or higher, ten (10) working days from the date on which the result is sent to the candidate concerned, by e-mail at the email address provided by candidates on their application form.

6.2 Delaying appointments until petitions are resolved

In the cases referred to in Scenario 1 of Section 5.2, the authorities shall not proceed with appointments until the 10 working days allowed for the submission of petition expire, unless as otherwise provided therein in points (i) and (iv).

6.3 Role of the Public Service Commission in dealing with petitions

In order to determine whether a petition submitted by a candidate on matters concerning competitive selection is justified or not, the Public Service Commission is empowered to inquire into and investigate any selection process.

Selection Boards should be in a position to comment on any points raised by candidates in their petitions. Each member of the Board should therefore keep notes and workings related to the selection process, as stated in 4.1(iv). Selection Boards are to submit their comments on the points raised by petitioners, and any other clarifications required, to the Public Service Commission, in the shortest time possible. A serious view, including the possible imposition of disciplinary sanctions, will be taken in cases of undue delay by the Selection Board in complying with this requirement. If the Commission finds no grounds to uphold a petition, it informs directly the petitioner and his/her legal representative, as the case may be.

When a petition, complaint or appeal is found to be justified, the Commission is empowered to change and/or annul any wrong decision and shall take whatever action it deems fit to provide appropriate redress, including the issue of a revised result or the annulment of the selection process, as well as recommending disciplinary/criminal action against defaulting officers/persons in cases of abuse, as considered appropriate. A revised result shall not give grounds for the submission of fresh petitions. However, the Commission may consider petitions from any candidate who is placed at a disadvantage in the revised ranking.

In exercising its power to change and/or annul any wrong decision, the Commission may recommend to the Prime Minister that an appointment be withdrawn in terms of sub- regulation 32 of the PSC Appointments Regulations.

In the case of a flawed selection exercise, or in other cases as deemed necessary and appropriate by the PSC, the Commission retains the right to order a fresh selection process by a fresh Selection Board.

Appendix 1

Standard Operating Procedure

Title	Timeline for Approval and Publication of Internal and External Calls for Applications – P&SD, DOI and respective Ministry
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1. The following steps, together with the steps explained in detail in the complementary document titled “Admin Recruitment Portal Guidelines for Circular Templates & Call Upload” (https://recruitmentadmin.gov.mt/attachments/2020_09_17_12_51_09_Recruitment%20Admin%20Portal%20Manual.pdf), are applicable for the approval and publication of internal and external calls for applications.
2. All calls for applications are issued on a Friday unless this is a public holiday, in which case calls are issued on the preceding day.
3. In the case of Internal Calls for Applications the respective Ministry is to submit calls for approval, by noon of the preceding Monday, to <https://recruitmentadmin.gov.mt/authentication/login>. If there is a public holiday on Friday, public calls are to be submitted on Thursday. In case of a public holiday on Monday, internal calls are to be submitted by Friday.

When an internal call is submitted for approval to P&SD, it is to be initially sent without a Circular Number. Before P&SD approves calls for publishing, the Ministry is requested to resubmit the final version including the consecutive Circular Number. The final approved version is then sent for publication.

In the case of External Calls for Applications, submission should be by the preceding Friday of the issuing week.

4. The following details are randomly checked on the part of P&SD: -
 - i. Vacancy is approved as per respective HR Plan and headcount. Correct nomenclature of call is as listed in the respective HR plan;
 - ii. If post/ position is a replacement, details of vacant posts/positions are requested accordingly, upon submission of call;
 - iii. The template used is correct (compare to templates on recruitment portal);
 - iv. In the case of a definite position, check that call constitutes an objective reason in terms of Regulation 7 (4) of S.L. 452.81;

- v. If call concerns positions which are EU related / EU fund management related / EU financed/ co-financed, these should be cleared with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for EU Affairs. It is to be ensured that such permission has been granted prior to submission of call to People and Standards Division;
- vi. In case of calls for applications which require the holding of a written examination, the necessary arrangements with the Registrar of Examinations have been made;
- vii. Verify salary as per salaries listed in the Salary Scales listed in the Collective Agreement or Schedule of Grades;
- viii. PPS duty is included with the list of duties;
- ix. Number of duties (between 12 to 15) in both Maltese and English versions tally;
- x. If call is related to Procurement, ICT, Human Resources and People Management check that the duties correspond to the pre- established above-mentioned duties; Eligibility requirements are correct, in line with pertinent classification agreement (in case of posts and positions covered by a Classification Agreement), according to remuneration package established by P&SD for the positions (in case of positions not covered by a Classification Agreement);
- xi. When a grade/position is tied to a specific area, the qualification/s required for eligibility purposes should correspond to the specified area and to the duties to be performed;
- xii. For public and service-wide calls, the clause of 'confirmed in their current grade/ position' (as applicable) is inserted;
- xiii. The respective clause is inserted in the case of grades/positions which have been identified as involving regulatory or inspectorate functions, for the purposes of subarticle 5 of article 4 of the Public Administration Act, as defined in the Annex to Directive 14;
- xiv. Qualifications in Level 4 include the note: '(subject to a minimum of 120 ECTS/ECVET credits, or equivalent*)'; as the case may be and subject to any specific arrangement/agreement approved by P&SD;

**A recognized qualification comparable to 120 ECTS/ECVET credits is only accepted subject to an MFHEA formal recognition statement being submitted with the application.*

- xv. Qualifications in Level 5 include the note: '(subject to a minimum of 60 ECTS/ECVET credits, or equivalent*)'; as the case may be and subject to any specific arrangement/agreement approved by P&SD;

**A recognized qualification comparable to 60 ECTS/ECVET credits is only accepted subject to an MFHEA formal recognition statement being submitted with the application.*

- xvi. Qualifications in Level 6 include the note: '(subject to a minimum of 180 ECTS/ECVET credits, or equivalent*)'; as the case may be;

**A recognized qualification comparable to 180 ECTS/ECVET credits is only accepted subject to an MFHEA formal recognition statement being submitted with the application.*

- xvii. Qualifications in Level 7 include the note: '(subject to a minimum of 90 ECTS/ECVET credits, or equivalent*)'; as the case may be;

**A recognized Masters' qualification with a minimum of 60 ECTS/ECVET credits is only accepted subject to an MFHEA formal Masters' recognition statement being submitted with the application.*

- xviii. In cases where a Level 6 qualification is required, the following is inserted:
'Qualifications at a higher level than those specified above will be accepted for eligibility purposes, provided they meet any specified subject requirements. A Master's qualification at MQF Level 7, or equivalent, must comprise a minimum of 90 ECTS/ECVET credits, or equivalent*; as the case may be;

**A recognized Masters' qualification with a minimum of 60 ECTS/ECVET credits is only accepted subject to an MFHEA formal Masters' recognition statement being submitted with the application.*

- xix. Pass mark is included;
- xx. For internal calls, check that publishing date is correct;
- xxi. Closing date is not less than 10 working days (Note: Public holidays that fall on weekdays are not considered as working days);
- xxii. In case of Expression of Interests, check with People, Support and Wellbeing Directorate regarding the granting of allowances;
- xxiii. Withdrawal of calls must be pre-approved by PPS.

5. If the call is not approved for issue, the P&SD refers back to the respective Ministry, indicating the reason for non-approval.
6. If the call is approved for issue and the call is an Internal Call, the call is sent to DOI and Intranet by the People Resourcing and Compliance Directorate, copying the Research and Personnel Systems Directorate on rps- psd.opm@gov.mt and other DOI and Ministry officials accordingly. Such approval is to be sent by 10.30am-11:00am of Friday.

In the case of an External Call, the P&SD sends approval to both Publications DOI and Intranet, copying the Research and Personnel Systems Directorate and other DOI and Ministry officials accordingly. Such approval is to be sent by 11:00 am of the Tuesday preceding issue of the call but not later than Wednesday 11.00am.

7. The following is the Intranet call publishing procedure by the Research and Personnel Systems Directorate:-
- i. Approval of calls is received from the People Resourcing and Compliance Directorate Generic Mailbox;
 - ii. Each call is converted from Word to PDF format, separating the English version from the Maltese version as well as the Annexes so that each version can be uploaded separately with the respective Annex;
 - iii. A folder with the date of publishing is created on the P: shared folder named as Upcoming Calls;
 - iv. A sub-folder is created with the Ministry name;
 - v. Two sub-folders are created under each Ministry for later saving of Internal or External Calls separately;
 - vi. Login on the Intranet website for the Public Service via the website “intra.gov.mt” and then click on “Vacancies”.
 - vii. Each saved call (in PDF format) is uploaded under the heading of the Ministry concerned, specifying name of call, Department (if applicable) and whether the call is internal or external;
 - viii. Calls are saved and published on the Vacancies Section of the Intranet;
 - ix. Same process is repeated for both Maltese and English;
 - x. After the calls are approved and published a print screen is taken and saved for record keeping.
8. In the case of Internal Calls, these are published by DOI on Friday on the Intranet - intra.gov.mt (Circulars Section).

In the case of External Calls, these are printed by the Government Printing Press on the Government Gazette. DOI uploads calls online on DOI website (Government Gazette Section) at 12.00hrs (noon).

9. Following approval of calls by the People Resourcing and Compliance Directorate, the Ministry concerned uploads calls (both Internal and External) on the Recruitment Portal, found on URL <https://recruitmentadmin.gov.mt>. In order to standardise all calls published on the Recruitment Portal it is to be ensured that the following guidelines are observed:
- Vacancy Title should be written in standard font, i.e. not uppercase
 - Vacancy Title should not include Post/Position of and Ministry name
 - Vacancy Title should be updated in the Maltese version of the call as well
 - Vacancy Reference should be in the format below:
 - Internal Call – Circular No. HR/Ministry 01/2020
 - External Call – Government Gazette dated dd/mm/yyyy
 - Vacancy Category should be relevant to the vacancy title and vacancy duties
 - Publishing and closing time should be those stated by P&SD. Any changes in publishing/closing time will be communicated by P&SD to all Recruitment Portal users.

Once all vacancy stages have been finalised and call is ready to be published it is to be ensured that the Publish Vacancy button is selected as otherwise the vacancy will not be published on the selected date and time.

10. As soon as a call for applications is published, the mobile application “Join the Public Service” alerts registered users. It is of utmost importance that all calls for applications which have been approved for publication are published on the Recruitment Portal on that particular Friday. On Friday at 12:00hrs, DOI issues an email dissemination with a list of the latest Internal and External Calls for Applications to fill vacancies in the Public Service/Sector for the current week.
11. It is to be stressed that the correctness of the contents of the issued calls lies within the responsibility of the Directors responsible for People Management in Ministries, in accordance with the Section 1.1 of the Manual on Industrial Relations and the Selection and Appointment Process under Delegated Authority in the Malta Public Service. P&SD executes random checking of the details as in point three (3).

Appendix 2

Standard Operating Procedure

Title	Timeline for the Selection Process
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1. The authorities shall ensure that HR Units within Departments provide support to applicants who require assistance in submitting an online application. In this regard, the authorities shall ensure that officers responsible for assisting applicants to submit online applications are fully knowledgeable of the process and perform this task with diligence.
2. All applications are to be checked upon receipt to ensure they include all required documents. DCS responsible and an owner from directorate should be named. The following procedures shall apply:-
 - i. if applications are received manually, checking has to be carried out there and then;
 - ii. in the case of online applications or applications received by post, the applicant is to be informed at the earliest of any incorrect/incomplete/missing documents;
 - iii. in the case of digital certificates, it should be ensured that all the relevant pages, including the QR Code of the downloaded records issued through Blockcerts, are submitted with the application; and
 - iv. in all cases (excluding cases where applicants are awaiting MQRIC equivalence where a maximum of four (4) months is allowed for processing) applicants are to be granted up to two (2) working days after closing date or up to two (2) working days from date of notification, whichever is the later, to submit the incorrect/incomplete/missing documents.

The above provisions shall apply to all selection processes unless the call for applications states otherwise.

3. In the case of MQRIC equivalence, a maximum of four (4) months is allowed for processing. A note should be attached to the application stating that, should the equivalence report not be available by the time of assessment, such applicants are to be assessed provisionally by the Selection Board, informed accordingly and also informed that they will be disqualified from the selection process if the MQRIC equivalence report is in the negative or no presented within four (4) months from the closing date of the call for applications. Moreover, subject to availability of vacancies, appointment cannot be made before the positive equivalence report is received from MQRIC.

4. The HR Unit of the ministry/department issuing the call for applications is to request the GP47 from the Director responsible for HR of the Department where the applicant is serving and in so doing, is not to indicate the vacancy applied for. The GP47 should be forthcoming within 3 working days. Upon receipt, the GP47 is to be uploaded as an attachment onto the respective candidate's application on the Admin Recruitment Portal.

The following guidelines are to be strictly observed when drawing up the GP47:-

- i. The GP47 is to be filled in accurately and in respect of public officers only;
 - ii. Only appointments made to Public Service posts/positions are to be included in the GP47. Hence, in the case of public officers detailed with a Public Sector entity, appointments to posts/positions with the entity are not to be included in the GP47;
 - iii. When a GP47 needs to be drawn up in respect of a detailed public officer, this is to be done by the parent Department;
 - iv. Persons who are solely employees of the Public Sector are, in no instance, to be issued with a GP47;
 - v. The GP47 should indicate, under the 'Remarks' column, whether the officer is confirmed or not in his/her current appointment, and
 - vi. The GP47 should be signed by an officer in the department in a grade/position in scale 10 or above, whose name is to be clearly shown and identifiable.
5. Before the closing date of the call, the Selection Board is to be appointed. If any member of the Board cannot meet any of the below deadlines, s/he should inform the Permanent Secretary upfront within two working days of appointment and ask to be relieved of the duties of the Board. Otherwise, the appointment stands.
 6. Upon expiry of the two (2) working days allowed for the submission of incorrect/incomplete/missing documents, the HR of the receiving Ministry/Department is to give access on the Government Recruitment Portal to the Selection Board to the applications and related documents, and is to furnish the Selection Board with (i) a database with the list of applicants whose application was complete, (ii) the list of applicants whose application was incomplete and who failed to submit any missing documents within the allotted two (2) working days (where applicable) and (iii) the application forms in the case of applications submitted through e-mail, by post or delivered by hand.
 7. DCS is to ensure that the Selection Board is provided with clerical support to carry out its tasks.
 8. The board is to meet immediately once the call closes and not later than five (5) working days from the closing date. The two months for the submission of the report kick-off then.

9. During the first (preliminary) meeting, the Selection Board is to perform the following tasks:-
- i. Inform applicants who did not submit the required documents by the given deadline (excluding MQRIC equivalence as per point 2 above) that application is incomplete and cannot be considered;
 - ii. Sign PSC Declaration Forms No 6 (Conflict of Interest & Non-Discrimination) and No 8 (Political/Trade Union Activities)- if not in a position to do so, the DCS should be notified immediately and a substitute is called for replacement;
 - iii. Inform ineligible applicants of their ineligibility, giving the reason, and of their right to submit representations to the PSC within five (5) working days;
 - iv. In the case of representations from ineligible applicants, the Selection Board is to reply to any queries raised by the PSC within five (5) working days from receipt of correspondence from PSC. PSC to submit feedback to the Selection Board on such representations;
 - v. Prescribe a set of sub-criteria for each approved criterion with corresponding allotment of marks, submit for the information of the Permanent Secretary and await his/her go-ahead to proceed with the assessment of candidates. In case where feedback is not received from the Permanent Secretaries within one week from date of submission, this will be taken to mean as approved;
 - vi. Decide on whether the oral interview is to be supplemented with additional, non-qualifying, mechanisms for the assessment of candidates - if in the affirmative, eligible applicants are to be informed accordingly in the communication summoning them for the assessment;
 - vii. Sign PSC Declaration Form No 7 regarding "Eligibility of Candidates";
 - viii. Inform eligible applicants of their assessment date (a minimum period of five [5] working days' advance notification is to be given). Selection Boards should plan internally and book the interview dates in advance.
 - ix. If the Selection Board is alerted that a particular candidate has received another appointment since the date of application (either by the HR Unit of the Department or by the candidate himself/herself during the interview), the following procedures are to be observed:-
 - a. If the interview has not been scheduled yet, the Selection Board shall inform the candidate in writing that s/he will not be called for an interview, stating the reason that the application in question is considered as renounced in view that the candidate has taken up another appointment;
 - b. If the interview has been scheduled but not carried out yet, the Selection Board shall inform the candidate in writing not to attend for the interview, stating the reason at (a) above;

- c. If the candidate informs the Selection Board that there was a change in the status of his/her appointment from the date of submission of application, the Selection Board is to likewise inform the candidate that the application is considered as renounced and is not to carry out the interview;
 - d. If the interview has been carried out but the result not yet published, the Selection Board shall inform the candidate that s/he will not feature in the published result, stating the reason at (a) above.
10. Selection Boards should carry the assessment of at least ten (10) candidates per working day.
11. Selection Boards are under no obligation to provide an alternative date when a candidate is unable to attend on the scheduled date. However, every effort should be made to grant candidates the opportunity of being assessed, particularly in genuine cases. Interviews by videoconference are permitted. If an applicant does not show up for the interview without prior notification, the person is not to be given another chance to sit for that same interview.
12. In the case of representations to the PSC by applicants who were declared ineligible by the Selection Board, if the PSC's decision is that the applicant is eligible, the Selection Board is to contact the eligible applicant to set a date for the interview. The interview is to be conducted not earlier than five (5) working days from receipt by applicant of notification. The related report is to be concluded and submitted to the DCS.
13. In those cases where the PSC upholds the Selection Board's decision that an applicant is ineligible, the Selection Board is to conclude the report and submit it to the DCS.
14. DCS is to carefully vet the report and result to ensure that there are no apparent mistakes or omissions, and scrupulously check the following:-
 - All candidates should be accounted for in the report;
 - The criteria and sub-criteria appearing on the Assessment Sheet should conform to those appearing on the statement of sub-criteria, which statement also forms part of the report;
 - It must be ensured that the Selection Board was consistent when awarding marks for qualifications and experience, as initially agreed upon in the statement of sub-criteria;
 - Only candidates who were actually assessed should appear in the result;
 - The marks awarded to each candidate in the result sheet tally with the overall marks awarded to the respective candidate in the assessment sheet;
 - The result should clearly indicate the minimum pass mark and, in the case of candidates who failed to obtain a pass mark, only their ID number should show in the result, and

- All pertinent documentation and forms are annexed to the report and that such documentation is duly compiled and signed by all the members of the Selection Board.

Report and result should then be submitted to the respective PS for approval. Once approved, DCS is to publish results on the notice board and on the website, and concurrently notify the applicants through SMS alert/email that results have been published, within ten (10) working days from when Selection Board submits its report.

15. PSC to submit feedback to the DCS on any petitions regarding the result.
16. In preparing for the issue of letters of appointment, DCS should keep in mind whether any vacancies need to be reserved for applicants who might still be awaiting the MQRIC equivalence report as per point 2 above.
17. In the case of successful candidates who received another appointment elsewhere after the result has been published, the HR Unit is to inform the successful candidate that s/he has lost the right to appointment as a result of the call for applications in question, giving the reason that the application in question is considered as renounced in view that the candidate has taken up another appointment. This is to be done irrespective of whether or not the successful candidate is in line for appointment, according to the order of merit.
18. The above timeframes should be strictly adhered to. It is only the Permanent Secretary who can extend such timeframes, after providing justifications to, and seeking the approval of, the Principal Permanent Secretary.
19. Selection process to be centrally monitored by Public Service Commission.

Appendix 3.1

Posts/positions in salary scales 7 and higher (Management)	
Criterion & weighting	Sub-criteria
Management and Leadership Skills 30%	Ability to analyse ⁵ Ability to assess and evaluate skills gaps to meet performance levels Goal setting abilities & Time Management skills ⁶ Conflict management / problem solving Communication skills ⁷ Risk management, standard setting and compliance analysis ⁸
Experience / Position-related Requirements 30%	Proven related experience ⁹ Related knowledge and competencies ¹⁰
Qualifications ^{11 12} 25%	Other relevant qualifications – Masters’ at MQF 7 – 22 marks Other relevant qualifications – Bachelors’ Degree MQF 6 or PG Dip MQF 7 – 19 marks Other relevant qualifications – Diploma Level 5 or MQF Level 7 Certification or MQF Level 6 (not Bachelors) – 12 marks Training & Development (other relevant certificates such as awards) in addition to the qualification – 3 marks
Personal Qualities / Aptitudes ¹³ 15%	Flexibility and ability to manage & function within a multilevel team Ability to work under pressure Interpersonal skills Best fit in team Ability to avoid conflict and problem solve

⁵ Ability to carry out a holistic situation analysis as well as systematic process analysis.

⁶ Be specific on how SMART objectives are set and goals met, hence demonstrating tangible skills of managing tasks and ensuring implementation.

⁷ The abilities of the candidate to communicate at various levels and his/her knowledge of barriers to communication and how these are to be addressed.

⁸ Candidate would need to assume full responsibility to carry out risk management, set standards of operation in accordance with standing policies and regulations and ensure compliance.

⁹ Experience is a similar role and with duties related to the post/positions applied for.

¹⁰ Candidate should be knowledgeable on the material covered in any qualifications required for eligibility purposes and familiar with the subject matter that is not covered by such qualifications (e.g. relevant legislation or official policy documents).

¹¹ The mark on qualifications will be at the maximum qualification only for that qualification which was not surrendered for eligibility purposes.

¹² In the case of a higher qualification than a Masters’, apportionment of marks should be re-assessed accordingly.

¹³ Specific measurable questions should be asked to assess these skills, such as the candidate’s level of determination, assertiveness and flexibility to adapt to different situations. Importance to:- self-confidence, relationship management, openness to feedback, body language, ability to listen, positive attitude, collaborative, empathy.

APPENDIX 3.2

Posts/positions in salary scales 8 – 10 (Administrative / Managerial)	
Criterion & weighting	Sub-criteria
Management & Leadership skills 30%	<u>Leadership skills:</u> Ability to assess, motivate and coach ¹⁴ Objectives and goal-setting abilities ¹⁵ <u>Management skills:</u> Knowledge of basic management and people management procedures and practices ¹⁶ Time management skills ¹⁷ Risk management and compliance analysis ¹⁸ Ability to avoid conflict, problem solve and handle challenges ¹⁹ Analytical ability and process analysis ²⁰
Experience/position-related requirements 30%	Exposure to various areas/roles in the Public Service/Sector ²¹ Knowledge and competencies related to the position ²² Proven experience of having carried out related duties ²³
Qualifications ^{24 25} 25%	Other relevant qualifications – Masters’ at MQF 7 – 22 marks Other relevant qualifications – Bachelors’ Degree MQF 6 or PG Dip MQF 7 – 19 marks Other relevant qualifications – Diploma Level 5 or MQF Level 7 Certification or MQF Level 6 (not Bachelors) – 12 marks Training & Development (other relevant certificates such as awards) in addition to the qualification – 3 marks
Personal Qualities / Aptitudes 15%	Flexibility and ability to work under pressure ²⁶ Interpersonal skills ²⁷ Ability to function within a team and best fit in team ²⁸

14 Apart from defining the role model, the candidate would need to demonstrate people assessment ability, motivational skills and also ability to coach and mentor.

15 Be specific on how SMART objectives are set and goals met, hence demonstrating tangible skills of managing tasks and ensuring implementation.

16 Knowledge of different types of management models and understanding different personalities.

17 Prioritising, fast tracking of easy tasks, time charts, etc.

18 Ability/potential to monitor and ensure compliance/adherence to set policies and regulations.

19 This sub-criterion should identify the candidate’s ability to manage and avoid conflict, as well as solve problems and handle challenges.

20 This sub-criterion should assess the candidate’s memory, verbal comprehension, reasoning and analytical potential.

21 The disposition to change and flexibility based on factual moves the candidate had the opportunity to make and took the decision to make. This could be in different ministries, departments or areas.

22 Knowledge/competencies which were learned in various areas of previous work, not necessarily in the same role.

23 Experience in a similar role and with duties related to the post/position applied for.

24 The mark on qualifications will be at the maximum qualification only for that qualification which was not surrendered for eligibility purposes.

25 In the case of a higher qualification than a Masters’, apportionment of marks should be re-assessed accordingly.

26 Flexibility indicates the ability of the candidate to function, or have functioned, between different simultaneous disciplines/areas.

27 Although the assessment of these skills may seem subjective, specific measurable questions can be asked, such as how the candidate feels when assertiveness is required, his/her level of determination and his/her capability of reading of interpersonal skills. Importance to: self-confidence, relationship management, openness to feedback, body language, ability to listen, positive attitude, collaborative, empathy.

28 Ability of the candidate to fit in a team, and more importantly to fit in an existing team that s/he would need to operate within.

APPENDIX 3.3

Posts/positions in salary scales 11 – 13 (Administrative / Supervisory)	
Criterion & weighting	Sub-criteria
Administrative/Supervisory/Potential for Leadership skills 30%	Ability to avoid conflict and problem solve ²⁹ Analytical ability and process analysis ³⁰ An understanding of assessment, motivation and coaching ³¹ Objectives and goal-setting abilities ³² Knowledge or potential to attain basic administrative/supervisory practices ³³ Time management skills ³⁴ Risk management and compliance analysis ³⁵
Experience/position-related requirements 30%	Exposure to various areas/roles in the Public Service/Sector ³⁶ Specialisation, experience/service and enhanced abilities directly tied to the area of the post/position ³⁷ Proven experience of having carried out duties which are related to the post/position ³⁸ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to the position ³⁹
Qualifications ^{40 41} 25%	Other relevant qualifications – Masters’ at MQF 7 – 22 marks Other relevant qualifications – Bachelors’ Degree MQF 6 or PG Dip MQF 7 – 19 marks Other relevant qualifications – Diploma Level 5 or MQF Level 7 Certification or MQF Level 6 (not Bachelors) – 12 marks Training & Development (other relevant certificates such as awards) in addition to the qualification – 3 marks
Personal qualities/aptitudes 15%	Flexibility and ability to work under pressure ⁴² Interpersonal skills ⁴³ Ability to function within a team and best fit in team ⁴⁴

²⁹ This sub-criterion should identify the candidate’s ability to manage and avoid conflict, as well as solve problems and handle challenges.

³⁰ This sub-criterion should assess the candidate’s memory, verbal comprehension, reasoning and analytical potential.

³¹ Apart from defining the role model, the candidate would need to demonstrate people assessment ability, motivational skills and also ability to coach and mentor.

³² Be specific on how SMART objectives are set and goals met, hence demonstrating tangible skills of managing tasks and ensuring implementation.

³³ Knowledge of different types of management models and understanding different personalities.

³⁴ Prioritising, fast tracking of easy tasks, time charts, etc.

³⁵ Ability/potential to monitor and ensure compliance/adherence to set policies and regulations.

³⁶ The disposition to change and flexibility based on factual moves the candidate had the opportunity to make and took the decision to make. This could be in different ministries, departments or areas.

³⁷ The candidate’s specialisation and development of abilities can be confirmed through the number of years of work in the areas.

³⁸ Experience in a similar role and with duties related to the post/position applied for.

³⁹ Knowledge/expertise can be gained through exposure in related areas which are not necessarily in the specific role or within the Public Service.

⁴⁰ The mark on qualifications will be at the maximum qualification only for that qualification which was not surrendered for eligibility purposes.

⁴¹ In the case of a higher qualification than a Masters’, apportionment of marks should be re-assessed accordingly.

⁴² Flexibility indicates the ability of the candidate to function, or have functioned, between different simultaneous disciplines/areas.

⁴³ Although the assessment of these skills may seem subjective, specific measurable questions can be asked, such as how the candidate feels when assertiveness is required, his/her level of determination and his/her capability of reading of interpersonal skills. Importance to: self-confidence, relationship management, openness to feedback, body language, ability to listen, positive attitude, collaborative, empathy.

⁴⁴ Ability of the candidate to fit in a team, and more importantly to fit in an existing team that s/he would need to operate within.

APPENDIX 3.4

Posts/positions in salary scales 14 – 16 (Administrative support)	
Criterion & weighting	Sub-criteria
Analytical skills 30%	Ability to avoid conflict and problem solve ⁴⁵ Analytical ability, verbal comprehension and reasoning ⁴⁶ Knowledge/understanding of objective setting and planning for achieving goals ⁴⁷ Time management skills ⁴⁸ Communication skills ⁴⁹
Experience/position-related requirements 30%	Exposure to various areas/roles in the Public Service/Sector ⁵⁰ Knowledge and competencies related to the post/position ⁵¹ Proven experience of having carried out duties which are related to the position ⁵²
Qualifications ^{53 54} 25%	Other relevant qualifications – Masters’ at MQF 7 – 22 marks Other relevant qualifications – Bachelors’ Degree MQF 6 or PG Dip MQF 7 – 19 marks Other relevant qualifications – Diploma Level 5 or MQF Level 7 Certification or MQF Level 6 (not Bachelors) – 12 marks Training & Development (other relevant certificates such as awards) in addition to the qualification – 3 marks
Personal qualities/aptitudes 15%	Flexibility and ability to work under pressure ⁵⁵ Interpersonal skills ⁵⁶ Ability to function within a team and best fit in team ⁵⁷

⁴⁵ This sub-criterion should identify the candidate’s ability to manage and avoid conflict, as well as solve problems and handle challenges.

⁴⁶ This sub-criterion should assess the candidate’s memory, verbal comprehension, reasoning and analytical potential.

⁴⁷ Identification of the candidate’s potential to set objectives, to plan, etc.

⁴⁸ A basic understanding of time management and its importance in the efficient execution of duties (including prioritising, fast tracking, time charts, etc)

⁴⁹ The abilities of the candidate to communicate at various levels.

⁵⁰ The disposition to change and flexibility based on factual moves the officer had the opportunity to make and took decisions to make. This could be in different departments or in different areas/ministries. If the candidate has never worked in the Public Service, and there is a mixed cohort of candidates (i.e. internal and external), the mark will be 0 for the external. If the call is external only, then the mark is to reflect the various areas of proficiency of the applicant.

⁵¹ Knowledge/competencies that could have been learned in various areas of previous work, possibly but not specifically on the same role.

⁵² Experience or related acquired understanding of what is required in the post/position or a similar role.

⁵³ The mark on qualifications will be at the maximum qualification only for that qualification which was not surrendered for eligibility purposes.

⁵⁴ In the case of a higher qualification than a Masters’, apportionment of marks should be re-assessed accordingly.

⁵⁵ Flexibility indicates the ability of the candidate to function, or have functioned, between different simultaneous disciplines/areas.

⁵⁶ Although the assessment of these skills may seem subjective, specific measurable questions can be asked, such as how the candidate feels when assertiveness is required, his/her level of determination and his/her capability of reading of interpersonal skills. Importance to: self-confidence, relationship management, openness to feedback, body language, ability to listen, positive attitude, collaborative, empathy.

⁵⁷ Ability of the candidate to fit in a team, and more importantly to fit in an existing team that s/he would need to operate within.

APPENDIX 3.5

Posts/positions in salary scales 11 – 16 (Technical/supervisory)	
Criterion & weighting	Sub-criteria
Potential for leadership/supervisory skills 30%	Ability to avoid conflict and problem solve ⁵⁸ Analytical ability and process analysis ⁵⁹ An understanding of assessment, motivation and coaching in relation to line of specialisation ⁶⁰ Objectives and goal-setting abilities ⁶¹ Knowledge or potential to attain basic supervisory practices required in the area applied for ⁶² Time management skills ⁶³ Risk assessment and compliance within established standard/procedures ⁶⁴
Experience/position-related requirements 30%	Specialisation, experience and enhanced abilities directly tied to the area of the post/position ⁶⁵ Knowledge, skills and competencies related to the post/position ⁶⁶
Qualifications ⁶⁷ ⁶⁸ 25%	Other relevant qualifications – Masters’ at MQF 7 – 22 marks Other relevant qualifications – Bachelors’ Degree MQF 6 or PG Dip MQF 7 – 19 marks Other relevant qualifications – Diploma Level 5 or MQF Level 7 Certification or MQF Level 6 (not Bachelors) – 12 marks Training & Development (other relevant certificates such as awards) in addition to the qualification – 3 marks
Personal qualities/aptitudes 15%	Flexibility and ability to work under pressure ⁶⁹ Good level of interpersonal skills ⁷⁰ Ability to function within a team and best fit in team ⁷¹

⁵⁸ This sub-criterion should identify the candidate’s ability to avoid conflict, as well as solve problems and handle challenges.

⁵⁹ Ability to analyse and capability of systematic process analysis.

⁶⁰ Identification of the candidate’s potential to be a future leader despite the need to develop in the role – people assessment ability, motivational skills and also ability to coach and mentor.

⁶¹ A basic understanding of SMART objectives which are used to set and meet goals, hence ensuring ability to support implementation.

⁶² The basic supervisory or people skills which include models and use of the different types with different personalities and basic people management at industrial/clerical levels.

⁶³ Time management which includes prioritising, fast tracking of easy tasks, time charts, etc.

⁶⁴ Ability/potential of the candidate to monitor and ensure basic adherence to set policies and regulations.

⁶⁵ The specialisation can be confirmed by the candidate’s work in the areas and his/her development of abilities through this, and is clearly tied to the number of years.

⁶⁶ Knowledge/expertise which could have been gained due to personal development and exposure in related areas which might not be specifically in the current role or within the Public Service.

⁶⁷ The mark on qualifications will be at the maximum qualification only for that qualification which was not surrendered for eligibility purposes.

⁶⁸ In the case of a higher qualifications than a Masters’, apportionment of marks should be re-assessed accordingly.

⁶⁹ Flexibility indicates the ability of the candidate to function, or have functioned, between different simultaneous disciplines/areas.

⁷⁰ Although the assessment of these skills may seem subjective, specific measurable questions can be asked, such as how the candidate feels when assertiveness is required, his/her level of determination and his/her capability of reading of interpersonal skills. Importance to: self-confidence, relationship management, openness to feedback, body language, ability to listen, positive attitude, collaborative, empathy.

⁷¹ Ability of the candidate to fit in a team, and more importantly to fit in an existing team that s/he would need to operate within.



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