

10. REVIEW OF SCHEMES OF SERVICE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 10.1 Generally, each specific grade in the public service has a prescribed scheme of service which also includes the qualifications' requirement. This chapter looks at the evolution regarding schemes of service since the last Report and the problems relating to their prescription and the issue of qualifications with a view to improving efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services.

Scheme of Service

- 10.2 A scheme of service is a legal document prescribed in accordance with regulations of the Service Commissions. It specifies the qualifications, duties, competencies, skills and experience required of the prospective job holder as well as the duties and responsibilities of a job. It also specifies the mode of recruitment/appointment and the salary attached to the grade.
- 10.3 The scheme of service is of vital importance in the management of human resource functions such as recruitment, promotion, performance management, training and development, job evaluation, design of pay structures, organisation design; and therefore the design or amendment to a scheme of service needs to be done with utmost care and in a timely manner. Delays in the prescription of schemes of service inevitably cause prejudice to the organisation, the employees concerned and disrupt the service delivery.
- 10.4 The Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (MCSAR) is responsible for processing all schemes of service before they are submitted to the appropriate Service Commissions for consideration and agreement. The Senior Chief Executive of the MCSAR has the responsibility for the prescription of scheme of service for each grade in the Civil Service and he gives his approval for prescription of the schemes after agreement by the appropriate Service Commissions.
- 10.5 With a view to improving the process and enabling the proper framing of schemes of service, the MCSAR has embarked on a few reform measures regarding schemes of service.

(i) Streamlining of Procedures

New and streamlined procedures have been provided to reduce the time frame for prescription of schemes of service, thus, enabling the filling of vacancies promptly. A Handbook for the Drafting of schemes of service in the Public Sector has been published by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms to provide better guidance to Ministries/Departments and other organisations in the Public Sector.

(ii) Review of Qualifications for grades at Entry Level

The policy for specifying the qualifications' requirements in schemes of service for entry grades in the public service has been reviewed to specify only the **highest qualifications** with effect from January 2013 in order to simplify the qualifications' requirements in schemes of service and to be in line with international trends. However, Ministries/ Departments still having the need to specify all basic qualifications in view of the nature of duties to be performed should submit justifications for maintaining same.

(iii) Setting up of an Electronic Platform

In order to further streamline procedures and minimise delay, the MCSAR has started a new project to set up an e-platform which would electronically link the different Ministries/Departments and other stakeholders for the processing of schemes of service. This innovative approach would respond to stakeholders' needs by reducing the time taken to finalise schemes of service.

10.6 The procedures for prescription of schemes of service as described in the Handbook for the Drafting of Schemes of Service in the Public Sector with subsequent amendment brought following meeting held with Officers-in-Charge of HR Divisions of Ministries/Departments is reproduced below for consistent implementation:

- (a) a Responsible Officer, after seeking the agreement of his Minister, consults the appropriate Staff Associations and the Federations of Unions for their views and comments on the draft scheme of service;
- (b) an advance copy of the proposed scheme of service including a scheme of service in respect of new posts or for any proposed amendment which may have a bearing on the salary grading of the post is submitted to the Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms for examination;
- (c) the Ministry/Department considers the views/comments from the staff side (i.e. Unions and Federations of Unions) and submits the proposed scheme of service to the Senior Chief Executive, Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms for consideration along with the views and comments received;
- (d) should there be a need for further clarification, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms deals with this through direct discussions and meetings with those concerned;
- (e) on finalisation, the proposed scheme of service is forwarded to the appropriate Service Commission for consideration and agreement; and

- (f) where the agreement of the appropriate Service Commission has been obtained, the scheme of service is prescribed in its official form.

Recommendation 1

10.7 We recommend that the MCSAR should continue to examine schemes of service from a broader perspective with a view to ensuring consistency and uniformity across the Public Sector.

10.8 We have received representations from stakeholders that despite provisions of the guidelines, there is still delay in the processing of schemes of service and procedures are not being consistently followed. This elongated processing time is causing delay in the filling of vacancies and is impeding service delivery.

Recommendation 2

10.9 We recommend that organisations, while keeping in view the guidelines for the drafting of schemes of service, should take advantage of the HRMIS and use on-line facilities for the prescription of schemes of service with a view to reducing further the processing time.

Qualifications

10.10 A very important requirement for the performance of a job is qualification which varies according to responsibility, accountability and complexity of a job. Evidently the higher the responsibilities, accountabilities and complexities, the higher is the qualification for the job. Qualifications specified in schemes of service have often given rise to different problems. We enunciate below some of the reported problems and make appropriate recommendations.

Alternative and Equivalent Qualifications

10.11 When conducting a recruitment exercise in public sector organisations, very often there is need to appoint candidates who possess qualifications which are considered to be equivalent/alternative to those prescribed in the scheme of service for the grade. We have in our past Reports recommended that alternatives to a prescribed qualification should, as far as possible, be of the same level and in the same subjects that are required for the post. As an organisational remedy to palliate for the shortage of staff, this practice should continue under the same conditions.

Recommendation 3

10.12 We recommend that alternatives to a prescribed qualification should, as far as possible, be of the same level and in the same subjects that are required for the post.

Additional Qualifications

- 10.13 The competencies and skills required for incumbents to deliver effectively in the respective positions are defined in the scheme of service. Today, we have an increasing number of officers who have successfully completed their tertiary education and in certain areas these officers possess higher academic qualifications than the minimum required for the grade, and are quite often performing duties at a higher level.
- 10.14 Officers joining the grade with higher qualifications than the ones prescribed for the grade are granted incremental credit which recognises their added value and potential in the performance of their duties. However, in other instances, officers possessing higher qualifications are called upon to perform duties of a higher position in the organisation and in such cases they are compensated by the payment of an allowance upon recommendation of the Responsible Officer and approval of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (MCSAR). There is need for this provision to continue as long as it is helping in the smooth delivery of services.

Recommendation 4

- 10.15 We recommend that where an officer in a grade possesses a technical or professional qualification higher than what is required for the grade and his competency/ability on account of the possession of that qualification is effectively used by the organisation through allocation of relevant duties, this officer may, subject to the recommendation of the Responsible Officer/Supervising Officer and the approval of the MCSAR, be paid an appropriate allowance.**

Experience Required for Recruitment/Appointment

- 10.16 Normally, experience required in a scheme of service is quantified as a given number of years or as experience at certain levels. While there is no reported implementation problems regarding the given number of years, we continue to have representations regarding the levels of experience.
- 10.17 In our past Reports, the definitions of the types of Management normally used in schemes of service were described as hereunder:-
- (i) Management at the primary level of operations in an organisation is responsible for the day-to-day running and administration of functional areas or responsibilities assigned to them.
 - (ii) Middle management level generally consists of heads of sections/divisions who execute or implement policies and plans and coordinate the activities of the Section/Unit.

- (iii) Senior Management – what constitutes senior management in one organisation may not necessarily be applicable in another organisation. Generally, senior management officials determine objectives, policies and plans of an organisation, mobilise assets and may be responsible for major units in an organisation.

10.18 We have also noted that reference is made to the term ‘Top Management’ which normally refers to the Chief Executive Officer or officers deputising for the Chief Executive Officer in his absence and who are involved in the strategic issues of the organisations.

Recommendation 5

10.19 We recommend that the terms Management, Middle Management, Senior Management and Top Management should not be used in drafting schemes of service, except when those terms clearly indicate the level of operations in their respective positions.

Qualifications Requirements for Grade-to-Grade promotion

10.20 In our previous Reports, we have recommended that where two or more qualifications are specified for promotion, an officer in the service at the level immediately below who possesses the whole of the higher/highest qualification but lacks only part of the lower qualification/s should also be considered for promotion provided he satisfies all the other requirements of the promotional grade. This provision should, where relevant, continue to be applied.

Recommendation 6

10.21 We recommend that where two or more qualifications are specified for promotion, an officer in the service at the level immediately below who possesses the whole of the higher/highest qualification but lacks only part of the lower qualification/s should also be considered for promotion provided he satisfies all the other requirements of the promotional grade.

Recognition/Accreditation of Prior Experience

10.22 The ability of employees to deliver on-the-job is highly dependent on the knowledge, skills and competencies of the incumbent. In our previous Reports, provisions were made for recognition/accreditation of prior learning designed primarily for employees who have acquired knowledge and skills/competencies through experience over the years. This provision should continue to apply provided the experiential learning is recognised by an approved body.

Recommendation 7

10.23 We recommend that for posts requiring technical qualifications which are scarce, consideration may be given to the appointment of candidates who

lack part of these technical qualifications but have acquired a minimum of 10 years' relevant experience/competence which has been duly recognised by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) or any other recognised body as sufficient to make good for the lack of the technical qualifications.

Qualifications Requiring Registration with Recognised Bodies

- 10.24 There are grades which require professional registration to recognised Institutes/Bodies according to the schemes of service while there are others which do not require such registration but incumbents register to avail themselves of books/periodicals issued by these bodies to broaden their outlook and keep abreast of latest development in their respective fields of activities. Registration involves payment of an annual subscription fee. Currently, the full amount of the annual subscription fee is refunded annually to officers who according to their schemes of service are required to be members of recognised Institutes/Bodies to be able to exercise their profession and have to subscribe for membership in order to be on roll.
- 10.25 Officers serving in posts carrying a salary in a scale the maximum of which is not less than Rs 52775 are granted an assistance equivalent to 50% of the annual subscription fee subject to a maximum of Rs 2860 on approval of the Responsible Officer and provided the knowledge/knowhow acquired on being a member of the Institutes/Bodies is relevant to the duties of the officer.
- 10.26 In the context of this review exercise, no representations were made by the Federations on this issue. However, several individuals and unions have made demands for full refund of subscription fees for all officers, whether required to be registered or not. We are, therefore, improving the current provision.

Recommendation 8

10.27 We recommend that:

- (i) an officer who is required to be a registered member of professionally recognised Institutes/Bodies according to the relevant prescribed scheme of service to be able to practice the profession, should be refunded the full amount of annual subscription fee payable to one of the relevant professional bodies; and**
- (ii) an officer drawing salary in a scale, the maximum of which is not less than Rs 56450 who, though not required to be registered with professionally recognised Institutes/Bodies according to the relevant prescribed scheme of service but has opted to register himself to keep abreast of latest development in his specific field of activities, may be granted, subject to the approval of the**

Responsible Officer, an assistance of 75% of the annual subscription fee subject to a maximum of Rs 3575, provided that the knowledge/knowhow derived from being a member of the Institutes/Bodies is of relevance to the duties of the officer.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

10.28 An assistance is currently being provided to some professionals who are required to achieve a minimum number of units of CPD every year as a condition to maintain their membership in their respective professional Institutes/Bodies. We are reviewing the ceiling that can be paid for such cases.

Recommendation 9

10.29 We recommend that officers who, as a condition to retain their membership to recognised Institutes/Bodies are required to achieve a minimum number of units of CPD should be provided an assistance of 75% of the total expenses in relation to the achievement of the appropriate number of units of CPD, subject to a maximum of Rs 13750 annually.

Technical Officer Cadre providing Support Services to Professional Cadre

10.30 Currently, there is an oversupply of overqualified professionals in the job market as a consequence of the improvement in the availability of learning opportunities provided by distance learning institutions and the setting up of an increasing number of tertiary institutions in the country. As such, many officers recruited in the public service possess higher qualifications than those mentioned in their respective schemes of service.

10.31 In our last Report, recommendations were made to provide for some reward to officers of technical cadre who are required to provide support to professional staff at a level higher than those of technical officer level, by movement beyond the top salary incrementally by an additional number of increments. These recommendations remain valid as we still have the same situation.

Recommendation 10

10.32 We recommend that officers in entry grades of a technical cadre, may be allowed to proceed beyond the top of their salary scale incrementally by the number of additional increments approved by the Standing Committee on Incremental Credits which they earned by virtue of the additional qualifications, where the qualification requirement for the entry grade is a diploma and subsequently the incumbents have upgraded their qualifications to a degree or post graduate in the relevant field.

10.33 This recommendation would be applicable only to officers drawing salary in a scale the maximum of which is not less than Rs 42325 and who are often called upon to do part of the professional functions.

10.34 We further recommend that the above provision shall equally apply to officers of the Civil Service, Parastatal Bodies, Local Authorities and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Special Provisions for Graduates and Professionals

10.35 Graduates and professionals are recruited to join the public sector organisations, and serve in various fields including Administration, Accounting, Architecture, Computer Science, Economics, Education, Land Surveying, Pharmacy, Quantity Surveying, Statistics, etc.

10.36 The organisation structure of professional cadres in the Public Sector differs from one organisation to another. The scope for movement higher up the hierarchy is not the same in each and every organisation. At certain levels, upward movement in the cadre is by selection whereas in others it is by promotion on the basis of seniority.

10.37 In our past review exercises the following issues were examined:

- (i) absence of effective supervisory role at a level immediately above the entry level;
- (ii) limited number of posts at the second level, causing stagnation of professionals in the entry grade on reaching their top salary ;
- (iii) the need for flatter structure and giving way to delayering with a view to sustaining increased efficiency and attain better results/outcomes;
- (iii) the need for merger of first two professional levels particularly where there was overlapping of duties to a large extent, in determining the remuneration package of professionals.
- (iv) the need for career earnings where levels have been traded off or levels could not be created.

10.38 Presently, with a view to providing incentives to graduate professionals stagnating on their top salary for several years, there is provision for graduates and professionals as well as for officers of the level of Deputy Permanent Secretary to move incrementally in the master salary scale so as: (a) to ensure that the remuneration package of incumbents with relevant experience in the Public Sector is competitive, and (b) link the grant of increment to more stringent performance criteria to bring about a performance oriented culture.

Recommendation 11

10.39 We recommend that graduate officers in entry grades/promotional entry grades requiring a University Degree or a recognised professional equivalent qualification drawing salary in a scale the maximum of which is not less than Rs 56450 and having reached the top of their respective salary scale should be allowed to move incrementally in the master salary scale up to salary point Rs 61325, provided that they:

- (i)** have drawn the top salary for a year;
- (ii)** have been efficient and effective in their performance during the preceding year; and
- (iii)** are not under report.

Recommendation 12

10.40 We further recommend that officers drawing salary in a scale the maximum of which is not less than Rs 62950 and not more than Rs 89000 and having reached the top of their respective salary scales should be allowed to move incrementally up to a maximum of two increments in the master salary scale, provided they:

- (i)** have drawn the top salary for a year;
- (ii)** have been consistently efficient and effective in their performance during the preceding year; and
- (iii)** are not under report.

10.41 The foregoing recommendation should also apply to corresponding flat salaries in the same range.

10.42 We have today more and more people possessing higher qualifications in various fields. This is due to the fact that there are more and more facilities which are available to acquire higher qualifications. On the other hand, special provisions have been made for graduates and professionals to move incrementally by three additional increments for three consecutive years after having reached the top of their respective salary scale. There is need to link the higher salary and the qualifications requirements to reflect the market position in the country.

Recommendation 13

10.43 We recommend that, the Authorities consider gradually raising the minimum qualification requirements for entry to grades requiring a degree with salary in a scale the maximum of which is Rs 56450 to a post graduate Degree or equivalent post graduate qualification in the respective fields, except in scarcity areas.

10.44 The foregoing recommendations for graduates and professionals should equally apply to Parastatal Bodies, Local Authorities and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, wherever relevant.

Experience for Graduates in the Public Sector

10.45 In view of the current market situation in the country regarding graduates, we are making a special recommendation for graduates with specific qualifications to gain experience in the public sector and improve their employability.

Recommendation 14

10.46 We recommend that the Authorities consider the advisability of recruiting graduates with specific qualifications on a fast track basis to assist organisations as well as enable graduates to acquire experience in the public sector for a period of two years. During their internship, they may be paid an allowance equal to three increments less than the initial salary of the salary scale recommended for the relevant grades. These graduates may thereafter be given consideration for appointment to posts where they are qualified in their respective fields subject to satisfying the criteria of Public Service Commission/Local Government Service Commission/any other recruiting body.

Trainee Grades in the Public Sector

Recommendation 15

10.47 We recommend that the Authorities should consider the advisability of enlisting the services of trainees, over and above establishment, in entry grades requiring at least the Cambridge Higher School Certificate or equivalent, wherever the need is felt in the public sector, in order to ensure that candidates with the right skills and competencies are subsequently appointed to the relevant grades. During the period of traineeship, trainees should undergo a period of training at the Civil Service College, Mauritius or at any other approved institutions and be paid a monthly allowance equivalent to two thirds of the initial salary recommended for the relevant grades. The Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms should, after consultations with parties concerned, identify areas where such trainees are required and set up schemes for the mode of enlistment and the terms and conditions of enlistment.
