



PARLIAMENTARY PROTECTIVE SERVICE
SERVICE DE PROTECTION PARLEMENTAIRE
CANADA

APPLYING FOR A JOB OPPORTUNITY AT THE PPS





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Step 1: How to apply on an external or internal job opportunity at the PPS

Where can you find job opportunities available at the PPS?

- All job opportunities (indeterminate permanent positions and temporary assignments) are published on: *CONNEX* > QUICK LINKS > [OPPORTUNITIES AT PPS](#).
- Notifications of temporary job opportunities (assignments, actings) are also sent via email to all PPS employees on the day they are published on *Connex*.
- Indeterminate (permanent) job opportunities will be posted on the Public Service Commission website jobs.gc.ca.
- Notifications may also appear in the "Bulletin" and may also appear on the various TV screens throughout the PPS.

It is up to you to keep abreast of job opportunities even if you are a shift worker or on leave.

Step 2: Determine if you can apply for a position

What is the difference between an external job opportunity and an internal job opportunity at the PPS?

- An external job opportunity is a position that is available within the PPS that both PPS employees and the public can apply for. These opportunities are always posted on jobs.gc.ca and are used to staff indeterminate positions as well as long term opportunities or anticipatory opportunities.
- An internal job opportunity is a position within the PPS that only its employees can apply for.

Internal opportunities can be:

- used to advertise temporary opportunities (acting appointments or assignments) or indeterminate opportunities within the PPS not available to the public;
- posted on jobs.gc.ca or *Connex*.

Step 3: Understanding the sections of a Job Poster or Notice of Job Opportunity

The poster or notice or job opportunity, contains valuable information including:

- a brief description about the position and the work environment;
- requirements needed to be screened into the selection process for further consideration (e.g. education, experience);
- asset qualifications;



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- the qualifications that will be assessed for those applicants who are screened in (e.g. knowledge, competencies, abilities, personal suitability); and
- other requirements that must be met in order to be considered for the position (e.g. security level, language proficiency, medical clearance, willingness to work overtime, travel, or shift work).

It is very important that you read the entire poster to ensure you are aware of all the requirements. You will find definitions describing the various sections of a typical notice of job opportunity (poster) in **ANNEX 1**.

Step 4: How to position yourself to successfully get your foot in the door

Once you identify the job for which you want to apply, then the real work begins.

Again, it is very important that you read the entire poster to ensure you are aware of all the requirements and know what the hiring manager or screening person is looking for in your application.

What you will need to provide when applying for a job opportunity at the PPS:

- a well prepared and thought-out resume/CV that gives a first impression of your professional and academic credentials. This is essential to showcase your accomplishments and experience qualifications;
- answers to questions that will be provided to you; or
- a detailed cover letter.

It is important that your resume/CV match the information that you will provide in your application or cover letter.

Step 5: How to prepare and present your answers properly when applying for an opportunity

Whether you are applying for an internal notice of job opportunity or a formal staffing process, the information you will provide will be similar. Follow the instructions provided on the poster or notice of job opportunity.

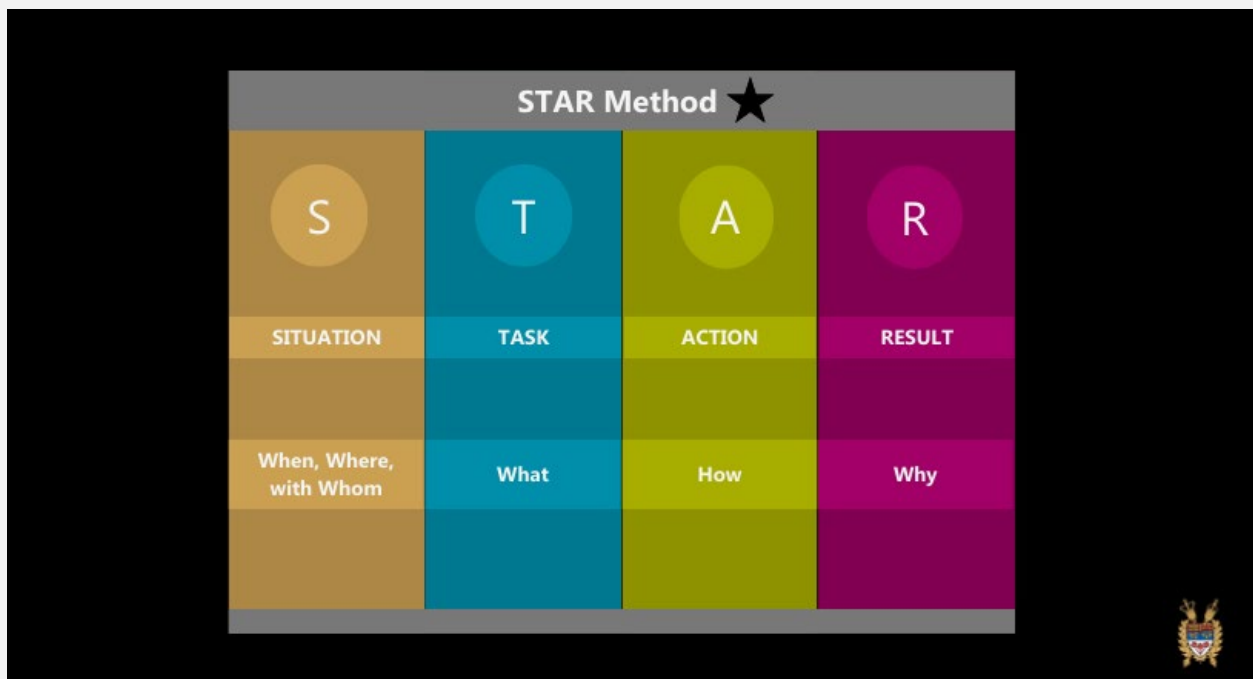
When preparing your answers, it is not sufficient to simply state that you possess such and such education, experience, or asset. Rather, you must clearly demonstrate how you meet the criteria by providing **concrete examples**.



The individuals screening your application must have evidence that you possess all of the qualifications required – they cannot make assumptions or guess. If it is not clear, you will be screened out.

One of the most efficient and easiest ways of providing a good answer is by applying the **STAR method**.

What is the STAR Method?



STAR is an acronym that stands for **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction and **R**esult. The STAR method is a technique you can use to frame your answers in a methodological and concise manner when applying to a position.

Situation: Start by setting the scene for your answer. Here, you outline a specific challenge you faced and give some context. For example, describe the project you worked on, your role, where you worked and for how long, where and when it took place, and any complexities that you faced.

Task(s): Elements that you need to consider and think of before tackling your situation. For example, what research did you do? Did you consult anyone and why? What were your considerations? What analysis did you do and why?



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Action(s): Explain what you did and how you did it. Be specific. Outline the steps you took to resolve the situation. Even if it was a team effort, explain what you did and lead with "I" instead of "We" to detail your approach. Describe your options, solutions, recommendation, and why you chose them.

Result(s): Finally, summarize the effects of your tasks and actions. Mention specific results/outcomes and, if possible, talk about facts, figures and statistics that quantify your success (e.g.: production went up by 20%, I was able to take more calls a day, I am able to process double the files than previously, my supervisor noticed an increase in the quality of my work...).

In any application (and interview), you need to be clear about what you personally accomplished and where you participated in the accomplishments of a wider team or accomplishment. If you are not careful, your language can create the wrong impression:

Active voice: "Completed the project in two months" (clear that you did it yourself)

Passive voice: "Project was completed in two months" (not at all clear who actually did it)

See **ANNEX 2** for examples of good and bad sample answers when applying for an opportunity.



Tips and reminders

- Apply in the official language you are most comfortable writing in.
- Read the criteria carefully and ensure that your answers or cover letter clearly demonstrate your education, experience and assets (if you have any) – and do not forget to look at the definitions!
- Make sure to give yourself sufficient time to apply properly and do not wait until the last minute.
- Verify if there is a word or character limit that you must respect or particular instructions to follow.
- Update and tailor your CV/resume to the position you are applying for. Using the same version of your CV/resume for all applications is not a good practice. See **ANNEX 3** for tools that can be helpful in preparing a good solid CV/resume.
- A good practice is to draft your answers in a Word document and to copy/paste them into the application site.
- Make sure that you have no grammar mistakes or typos – do a spellcheck!
- Re-read your answers to make sure you did not forget anything.
- Try to vary your answers – this will demonstrate the depth and breadth of your experience.
- Do not copy/paste the same response for all criteria – you will be screened out.
- Do not say “See CV for answers” – you will be screened out.
- If you possess any assets, provide a response. Demonstrating an asset can be the deciding factor in retaining your application.
- Use “I” instead of “We” when formulating your answers – use the active voice. The person evaluating your application needs to understand what you did in the answers you provide.
- It is a good practice when preparing an application letter, to indicate clearly which criterion you are referring to (e.g. E1 – Experience in then provide the answer).
- Do not assume that the person reviewing your application will know what you do or know what you are referring to. Be specific.
- Remember that if it is not indicated, it will not be evaluated even if the screening person is familiar with the example you are describing.
- Use plain language and try not to use too many acronyms to ensure comprehension of your answers.
- There are many resources available online – use them! (see **ANNEX 3**)
- As mentioned, it’s up to you to keep abreast of job opportunities. Ask someone from your network to flag them for you if you anticipate being away.
- If you have questions or concerns, just ask HR. If we can help, it will be our pleasure to do so!



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ANNEX 1

Definitions describing the various sections of a typical poster or Notice of Job Opportunity

Position title(s)

The official title of the position.

Department or agency name(s)

The name of the organization (e.g. PPS) to which the position belongs.

Location(s)

The geographic location of the position (e.g. Ottawa, NCR).

Classification(s)

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

The PPS has its own classification system, and you may find the PPS group and level as well as what would be considered an equivalent group and level in the Public Service.

Salary

The salary range based on the level of the position.

Closing date

The last date that applications will be accepted. Applications must be received by the date, time and at the address specified on the poster. Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.

Reference number

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

Selection process number

The identification number assigned to the selection process. This number should be cited for any correspondence regarding the process for which you are applying for.



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Employment tenure

The duration of the appointment (i.e. indeterminate or term). Some posters will advertise multiple positions with different employment tenures.

Work environment

Describes the work environment of the position at the PPS.

Challenge

A description of roles, responsibilities, duties, and reporting relationship associated with the position(s).

Intent of the process

This section will explain how the results of the process will be used.

Examples:

- To staff one indeterminate position immediately as well as a six (6) month acting or term position.
- To create a pool or an eligibility list for current and future needs of the PPS.
- To staff an immediate vacancy on an indeterminate basis.
- The results of this selection process may be used to staff additional, future (anticipatory) or similar positions within the PPS.

Who can apply (Area of Selection)

Only candidates who are in the area of selection can apply on the staffing process. If you do not meet the area of selection, even if you meet all the other criteria, you will not be considered in the staffing process and will be screened out.

Examples:

- Open to Canadian citizens or permanent residents residing in the NCR.
- Open only to PPS employees.
- Open only to members of a designated Employment Equity group (women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, or persons with a disability).

Positions to be filled

Refers to the number of positions anticipated to be staffed via this staffing process.

Information you must provide

This section indicates what must be included in your application. Please read it carefully and ensure that your application contains all of the information requested.



At a minimum, you will be asked to upload your resume and cover letter.

To be considered, your application must clearly explain how you meet the following (essential qualifications).

This section identifies the essential qualifications (criteria) needed to be considered for the position you are applying to. **You must meet the education and all experience qualifications to be further considered for the job opportunity.**

- Education or Occupational Certification will outline the level of education that you must possess. You will be expected to provide proof of education during a staffing process, but not during the application phase. Examples:
 - University degree from a recognized post-secondary institution in a field related to security.
 - A post-secondary diploma OR an acceptable combination of experience, training, and education.
 - OSHA Certification
- Experiences (and applicable definitions if pertinent) will outline the experiences that you must possess and clearly demonstrate to be considered for the position. Examples:
 - Significant** experience managing multiple and complex tasks and projects.
 - Experience working in a law enforcement or security environment.
 - Two years of experience in customer service.

The following will be applied/assessed at a later date (essential for the job).

This section identifies:

- The level of language proficiency of the position being staffed.
 - A language level is broken down into three sections:
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Oral Interaction
 - If applying for a job where there is a language requirement other than your first language, you will be required to verify that you meet the required level, you will be tested using the Federal Government standards or required to provide official language results.
- The knowledge criteria that will be assessed during the process.
 - This section will outline the knowledge that you must bring to the table to successfully perform the duties of the position. Examples:
 - Knowledge of Government of Canada legislation, policies, current, and emerging issues, principles or practices.
 - Knowledge of methods, procedures and tools used to support a range of administrative activities.
 - Knowledge of firearms inspection and reporting.



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- Knowledge of emerging technologies and equipment in the field of security.
- [PPS Core Competencies](#) that will be evaluated during the process:
 - Teamwork and Collaboration
 - Thinking Skills
 - Client Service Orientation
 - Communication
 - Leadership
- [PPS Core Values](#):
 - Respect
 - Professionalism
 - Accountability
 - Integrity
 - Leadership

The following may be applied/assessed at a later date (may be needed for the job).

This section outlines the assets that would be additional education or experience that is nice to have, but not essential to being able to apply. Possessing one or more assets would benefit the organization, the team or the employee. Assets are often used during the screening phase or when justifying the hiring manager's choice of candidate.

- Examples:
 -
 - Post-secondary education in a field applicable to the job.
 - Recent experience supervising employees, including work distribution and other related duties.
 - Twenty-four (24) months experience as a Detection Specialist within the PPS. Note that leave without pay, leave with pay in excess of 30 consecutive days and full-time language training are excluded from the calculation of the 24 months.

Operational Requirements/Conditions of Employment

This provides information on what is expected/required of you should you be successful in this process. Please read these sections carefully and make sure you are prepared to commit to the requirements before you apply. If you are not prepared to meet any of the requirements listed in the job poster, then the position may not be right for you, and you should reconsider applying.

Operational Requirements – outlines what you will have to do to work in this position and environment. It will include statements such as:



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- Willing and able to work shift work including weekends and stat holidays.
- Willingness and ability to work overtime as required.
- Willing and able to work from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on site.

Conditions of Employment – describes what you require before being hired, outside of essential qualifications. Failure to meet these conditions will result in you not being offered the position.

This section includes such elements as:

- Security Clearance (i.e. Reliability Status, Secret, Top Secret)
- Valid Driver's License
- Must meet and maintain the linguistic profile of the position

Other Information

This section includes important information about:

- what assessments may be administered
- employment equity*
- special needs/accommodations**
- official languages
- how the PPS will communicate with applicants
- how you will be notified of any results issued
- instruction on the format that you should use when applying
- whom to contact for questions
- other relevant information

***Employment Equity:** If you are a member of a designated group (women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, or persons with a disability), you are encouraged to self-identify.

****Special Needs:** An applicant's special needs are not used as a factor in a staffing decision but, rather, are accommodated to ensure that the individual is given adequate opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications for the position. It is the responsibility of the individual being considered in a selection process to advise the PPS if accommodation is required. The PPS will make reasonable efforts and take appropriate steps to accommodate any special needs an applicant might have when participating in a selection process. If contacted in relation to a job opportunity or testing, the applicant should inform the PPS as soon as possible of any accommodation needs before a planned interview or before any testing is required. For example, if you require wheelchair access, and the building where your interview is to take place does not provide it, an alternative location may be chosen. Similarly, if you have a visual impairment, you may require a test in large print format to meet your needs. The accommodation will vary depending on the individual's needs.



ANNEX 2

Examples of good and bad application responses

The poster indicates the following as an education criterion:

A post-secondary diploma OR an acceptable combination of experience, training and education.

Good answers that clearly demonstrate the education requirement:

- I obtained a high school diploma in 2001 from ABC High School and have 15 years of experience and training in the field of security (10 years as a Security Officer for Guarda and 5 years at the PPS as a Detection Specialist).
- I obtained a 2-year college certificate in Law and Security from Algonquin College in 2005.
- I have a bachelor's degree in human resources obtained in 1998 from the University of Carleton.

Bad answers where candidates were screened out:

- See my CV. **Never provide this as an answer to any criteria.**
- I obtained a high school diploma in 2001 from ABC High School. **HS diploma is not considered post-secondary and no combination is provided**
- I have a university degree. **In what? When did you get it? From where?**
- I have a high school diploma and experience. **Where and when did you get your diploma? Is your experience relevant to the position? How many years of experience – 2 months or 6 years?**

Example 1 **Good answer** that clearly demonstrates the candidate meets the experience requirement.

The poster indicates the following experience criterion:

Please describe how you meet the following essential criterion by providing at least one clear and detailed example:

*E1- *Recent and **significant experience formulating recommendations and producing reports.*

**Recent is defined as being within the past five years.*

***Significant is defined as being for at least three consecutive years.*



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Yellow – Situation **Blue** – Actions
Green – Tasks **Gray** – Results

Applicant's answer:

I am an HR professional with over 15 years of experience in several HR disciplines such as executive and non-executive staffing, Labour Relations, EX-performance, and Official Languages. I worked for 10 years at Health Canada as an advisor (2010 to 2020), and have been employed by the PPS since 2020 as a Senior Advisor within the Talent Management Team. I am called upon daily and frequently to provide recommendations to my clients, colleagues, and managers. A good example of this was when I was asked by a PPS client a few months ago on how to hire someone from the Public Service who does not meet the language profile of the position they wanted to staff. I started by asking several questions to ensure that I understood the requirements (such as the start date, where the employee is from, what steps the manager took to find a person who met the language profile of the position, why this person in particular...). I asked for supporting documentation such as the staffing request, job description and qualifications needed, the candidate's CV and OL profile. After careful review and analysis of all the information, I recommended 2 options: non-imperative staffing or an Interchange Canada (IC) assignment as the employee was from an agency outside of the GoC core. I outlined the pros and cons of each option and made a recommendation of going with the IC assignment and why this was the best option in these circumstances. I explained the IC process to them as this was something they were not familiar with. The client accepted my recommendation and I proceeded with organizing the IC agreement and was able to have the employee start by the negotiated start date. I also recommended to the client that the new employee take some language classes and that the employee could then be transferred to the PPS upon meeting the linguistic profile.

As the IC representative for Health Canada (2012 to 2020), I was responsible for ensuring that the mandatory reporting of all IC transactions was done to the Treasury Board via their online portal. To do so, I created an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of all the assignments (name of participant, start and end date, participating organizations, salaries, special circumstances, etc.). I went through all the IC agreements for the last 5 years and gathered all the required data to populate my spreadsheet. I then pulled from this spreadsheet to report to TBS on all individual IC transactions. I did this reporting on a quarterly basis. This information and data were also provided in a report to HC Senior Management (my Director and Director General) for statistical and reporting purposes. The creation of this tracking tool greatly facilitated the reporting to TBS and for senior management, and my colleagues and manager can refer to this tool as it is kept up to date and available on a SharePoint site.



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Example 2 **Bad answer** that does not demonstrate that the applicant meets the experience requirement.

The poster indicates the following experience criterion:

Please describe how you meet the following essential criterion by providing at least one clear and detailed example:

E3 - Recent and significant** experience providing client service in a work environment.*

**Recent means within the last five (5) years.*

***Significant is defined as the depth and breadth of experience normally associated with having performed a broad range of complex activities related to this task, which are acquired on a full-time basis over a given period of time.*

Applicant's answer:

- Communicate and organize with food providers, hospital personnel, clients and project managers.
- Food service providers: set up food sources and organize stock by dates and times.
- Hospital staff: figure out schedules, locations, and fees.
- Clients: discuss delivery plans and schedules
- Project managers: troubleshooting, scheduling

This person is rejected/screened out based on the following:

- Did not provide one clear and detailed example – did not follow instructions.
- No details provided at all – incomplete answer, no context, tasks or outcome.
- Do not know what this person's role was, what actions/tasks were done and the outcome.
- Cannot determine if this example is within 5 years as no timeline is provided.
- Cannot define the depth and breadth of the experience as no details provided regarding any activities.

Example 3 **Bad answer** that does not demonstrate that the applicant meets the experience requirement.

The poster indicates the following experience criterion:

Please describe how you meet the following essential criterion by providing at least one clear and detailed example:

Significant and recent** experience in conducting research (across both open or closed source platforms) and analysing various types or sources of information to support decision-making processes.*



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**Significant is defined as the depth and breadth of experience normally associated with having performed a broad range of activities related to this task, which are acquired on a full-time basis over a period of two (2) years.*

***Recent means within the last five (5) years.*

Applicant's answer:

My significant experience is creating programs and organizing significant data collection that allows me to make the best decision possible and provide a correct program based on the data collection entry. Also, creating opportunities and activities for collecting data and defining the specific behaviours and task analysis that are targeted. For example: Creating a data collection sheet that will provide information about what has happened before the behaviour happened, defining what the behaviour was and what happened as consequence. This information allows me to understand the whole concept underlying individuals' behaviours and their reactivity to certain situations. Based on this information, I will create better activities and I can request a change of medication.

This person is rejected/screened out based on the following:

- The answer provided does not demonstrate at all the experience required. There is no mention of research, open or closed source platforms, or analysis.
- No concrete example was provided.
- The example is poorly written.
- No indication of their role and how long this person did anything.
- Cannot define the depth and breadth of the experience as no details regarding any activities other than creating a database are provided.
- Cannot determine if this example is within 5 years as no timeline is provided.



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ANNEX 3

Resources:

[Applying for Government of Canada jobs: How to apply - Canada.ca](#)

[Resume Builder - Job Bank](#)

MS Word – many template samples of CVs/resumes are available (do not choose one with a picture).

[Synonym dictionary](#)

[195 Action Verbs to Make Your Resume Stand Out](#)

[Qualification Standards in Relation to Official Languages - Canada.ca](#)

[Cracking the Code - Canada.ca](#)