



INDIGENOUS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

JOB DESCRIPTION REVIEW GUIDE





Background/Introduction

The Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Framework (Framework) is designed to help the GNWT improve Indigenous representation among its public servants. To support the Framework the Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Action Plan sets out clear objectives and deliverables to address the Framework's two main goals:

1. increase Indigenous representation, and
2. support Indigenous leadership opportunities.

With the purpose of increasing Indigenous representation, one of the objectives is to address bias, racism, and discrimination throughout the staffing process, resulting in improved cultural competency in the public service.

Job descriptions are the formal document that initiate the recruiting process, and is the first thing candidates use to decide whether to apply to a department or organization. This guide will provide departments and agencies guidance on how to address the action item, achieve the deliverables, and address systemic barriers.

Action 1.1 speaks to conducting a detailed review of all GNWT job descriptions. **Action 1.1** includes the following corresponding deliverables:

- Departments and Agencies will conduct detailed review of all job descriptions, targeting systemic barriers.
- The Department of Finance will develop resources for departments to associate Indigenous cultural and social factors with job descriptions.
- The Department of Finance will develop guidelines to assist departments in determining the minimum education and experience required for positions.

Systemic Barriers

Indigenous peoples make up just over half of the NWT's population, yet Indigenous employees make up only about 30% of the GNWT public service.

Systemic barriers include intergenerational impacts from Residential Schools, 60's scoop, poverty, lack of quality education, loss of culture, unequal access to services, discrimination and lack of access to reliable internet in remote communities. These systemic barriers can also lead to barriers in employment, which results in a public service workforce that does not fully represent the public it serves. The list below outlines the kinds of barriers which can occur:



- **Attitudinal barriers** exist in unconscious biases and stereotypes that result in unequal opportunities for Indigenous people.
 - E.g., A manager provides more opportunities to a non-Indigenous employee who has shown interest in the past, assuming the Indigenous employee is not interested because they did not initiate the conversation and are quiet.
- **Social barriers** such as differences in worldview on work-life balance which may result in inflexibility and a perceived inability to accommodate Indigenous family/community responsibilities.
 - E.g., Indigenous employee requests time off to participate in traditional activities and is denied due to operational requirements.
- **Cultural barriers** include language barriers, lack of cultural competency, and conflicting worldviews resulting in disagreements on the process of completing tasks in the workplace.
 - E.g., Non-Indigenous people tend to value tasks over relationships and Indigenous people tend to value relationships over tasks – these two different perspectives would result in two different processes when working.
- **Physical barriers** such as the centralization of most jobs in the larger communities, location of post-secondary institutions in the larger hubs or the south, lack of available housing and reliable internet may result in an inability to access available jobs.
 - E.g., An applicant misses the deadline for a job they are applying on because of an internet outage in their community.
- **Credential/Educational barriers** in which educational and/or experience requirements listed are greater than what is required to perform the job competently, and equivalencies considered do not always recognize links between different ways of acquiring knowledge and the job to be performed.
 - E.g., Educational requirements, particularly advanced degrees (i.e. Bachelor or Master's degree), could be biased against individuals with relevant experience but lacking a college education due to other barriers.
 - Important Note: Indigenous people thrive on and value ancestral knowledge (traditional knowledge) which may be a greater benefit than western education.

Assigned Work Section

This section of the Job Description includes the Purpose of the Position, Scope, Responsibilities, and Working Conditions; this is the assigned work of the position, its context in the organization, and the physical, sensory, environmental and mental demands that the incumbent will encounter while performing the job. These sections speak only about the position and are neutral with respect to the job-holder; none of these first four sections of the job description should refer to a job holder's personal attributes, education, and/or experience.



Comprehensive training on how to write an effective job description is available monthly via MSTeams, with unlimited sign-up through the Learning and Development Calendar: (<https://my.hr.gov.nt.ca/courses/job-description-writing>). Independent learning material is available at all times in the [Online Managers' Toolkit](#), and direct questions may be sent to the Job Evaluation and Organizational Design unit team at job_evaluation@gov.nt.ca.

A few key considerations when reviewing the Job Description for systemic barriers:

- Could the position be in a non-centralized location, and/or does the position meet the criteria for the Remote Workplace Policy?
- What is the minimum level of education and experience needed to perform the job competently?
- What types of expanded equivalencies of education and experience could be considered? What Bona Fide requirements should be included?

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) Section

This section of the job description provides candidates a better sense of the knowledge, skills and abilities that will be needed to competently fulfil the role and responsibilities of the position. As such it is vital that this section does not reflect any unconscious bias or systemic barriers.

All statements in this section should be examined for unconscious bias or any other potential system-wide barrier to hiring qualified priority candidates with respect to culture/location of origin, gender, and/or GNWT-specificity (i.e., knowledge of SAM or PeopleSoft versus just 'Oracle-based programs'). Please see the tables below for additional detail.

Things to consider when assessing the KSA Section of the Job Description:

- Would having Traditional knowledge be beneficial for the position (e.g., wildlife or land monitoring experience, knowledge of the area, community protocols)?
- Are there any hands-on skills that should be considered (e.g., from ability to live on the land, work with community members, or skilled in organizing community events)?
- Would the ability to work well with close-knit communities be important to the position (e.g., able to interact effectively with a variety of cultural groups)?

The GNWT has committed to having a public service that is representative of the people it serves. Therefore, the following standardized KSAs should now be included on all job descriptions:

- **Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.**



Please see the tables below for additional suggestions:

Knowledge			
Include:	Examples to include:	Avoid:	Examples to avoid:
Include only knowledge realistically necessary for a base standard of competent job performance	Divisional Admin Assistant role: Knowledge of computerized and physical filing systems	Avoid a wish list of 'nice-to-have' or 'next level' items	Divisional Administration Assistant role: Detailed knowledge of financial budgeting and planning cycles
Refer to necessary specific information that's in the public domain	Electrical Inspector: "Knowledge of <i>NWT Electrical Protection Act</i> and Regulations, the Canadian Electrical Code, and other applicable building and safety codes and standards"	Avoid listing documents or processes that are exclusive to existing GNWT employees only	Knowledge of detailed department-specific procedures and protocols
Technical knowledge directly related to the type of work	Knowledge of computerized accounting systems; Knowledge of computerized human resource information systems;	Avoid listing systems that are specific to GNWT	Do not mention SAM or PeopleSoft specifically; given someone generally familiar with computerized systems can be trained specifically in SAM/PeopleSoft upon hire
Addressing cultural bias and sensitivity	Understanding of the impacts of colonization, institutional and structural racism and biases have had on society, in particular Indigenous people who make up more than half the population.	Avoid statements that contain implicit bias and/or are disrespectful of a community	Do not reference accommodations in a smaller community as inferior to those in a larger community
Skills and Abilities			
Include:	Examples to include:	Avoid:	Examples of what to avoid:
Expertise and personal attributes that will contribute to competent job performance in the role	1) Ability to prioritize work; 2) Ability to listen and respond positively in all client situations; 3) Skilled in the use of landscaping and maintenance tools	Avoid hyperbolic, disrespectful, or exaggerated language – list ONLY what is required for competent performance	"Able to deal with angry clientele"
GNWT-wide expectation of ability to behave with appropriate respect to other individuals, regardless of position	Ability to commit to upholding cultural awareness and safety, personal diversity, and inclusion	Avoid unconscious bias with respect to cultural safety and inclusion	



Ability to work well with a variety of cultural communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Ability to build strong relationships and work directly with people from other communities.2) Ability to adapt communication styles to multiple cultural environments (e.g., communication when following Elder protocols or cultural safety protocols)3) Ability to engage the public in a culturally appropriate manner both in writing and orally, to members of other, different communities.4) Ability to incorporate the perspectives of all members of the community in a decision-making process.5) Skilled in teamwork with members from a variety of backgrounds and cultures.6) Ability to consider diverse literacy levels across the general population when developing documents and resources.		
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Qualifications (“Typically attained by” or “TAB” statement) and Equivalences

This section of a job description should list the minimum levels of combined education and experience required to competently perform the roles and responsibilities of the position.

All job descriptions should now include this line at the end of their TAB section: "Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered." This is to encourage applicants whose qualification may not exactly match the TAB statement to still apply; that different education and experience will be reviewed and may still be considered relevant to the job.

You may also wish to engage staff members on your team to request input when revising TAB statements or considering the minimum education and experience needed to perform the job at its baseline



competent level; existing staff may provide unexpected insights into what education/experience is most relevant to the job.

Specific equivalent levels of education and experience will be discussed and confirmed by the hiring committee as part of the staffing process, and before any resumes are reviewed. For instance, whether a 2-year Diploma and four years of experience would be considered equivalent to a 4 year Degree and 1 year of experience, or how much relevant experience without post-secondary education, for competent performance of the job. When considering relevant education, unless a specified educational degree is required for the roles and responsibilities of the job, consider the range of other fields of studies that could be relevant and beneficial, and discuss these in detail with your HR Client Services team during the staffing process, being aware of the potential for unconscious bias. (See Appendix A for a general guide on fields of study that maybe relevant. Seek additional information from your HR Client Services representative.)

Guidelines below outline the highest recommended minimums of education and experience for approximate levels of roles. If a specific job can be done competently with fewer years of experience, then reduce accordingly, but below 6 months is not recommended. Zero experience is usually an Intern, which is a learning level role that has education but no experience, and the job is highly supervised and mentored.

Please see the table on the next page for suggested guidelines:



Education and Experience Guidelines for “Typically Attained By” (TAB) Statement:

Type of Job	Sample Job Types	Typical Education Level		Typical Minimum Experience
Senior Management (ADM level)	ADM/Vice President	Degree or Advanced Degree	+	8-10 years relevant exp (<i>choose one number, e.g. "8"</i>), including 3 yrs managing people and resources
Senior Management (Director Level)	Director/Regional Superintendent	Degree or Advanced Degree	+	6-8 years relevant exp (<i>choose one number, e.g., "7"</i>), including 3 yrs managing people and resources
Management (Manager)	Manager/Asst. Director	Degree	+	5 years relevant exp including 1 year supervisory or leading a team
Supervisory (Supervisor)	Supervisor/Team Lead	Degree or Diploma	+	3 years relevant experience, including 1 year in specifically relevant area
Regulated Professional	Engineer/Geologist /Accounting	Degree and Professional Body Designation	+	3 years relevant experience, including 1 year in specifically relevant area
Nursing and Midwifery	Specialized Nurse/NP/Midwife	Degree and Professional Body Designation	+	2 years relevant experience, including 1 year in specialty area
Nursing 1	General Duty Nurse (RN)	Degree and Professional Body Designation	+	0 experience required; comprehensive and closely supervised 12-month onboarding will occur according to national standards
Specialized Technical	Water Scientist/IT and IS/Financial Analysis/Senior Policy	Degree and Job-Specific Certifications	+	3 years of relevant experience
Advanced Support	Financial Officer/Fully Qualified Policy	Degree/Diploma	+	2 years of relevant experience
Technical	Lab Tech/Financial processing	Degree/Diploma	+	1 year of relevant experience
Non-Technical	Program based/Admin	Diploma/Specific On-The-Job training	+	1 year of relevant experience
Non-Technical operational	Manual, non-technical	On-The-Job training (short term)	+	6 months of work experience, whether paid or unpaid
Intern	Various - all learning roles, closely supervised	Degree, Diploma, Certificate, Specific Coursework	+	0 experience required.



Notes on TAB information:

If there seems to be crossover between Management/Supervisory and Professional/Technical levels – such as a manager/supervisor that is also a professional or technician (like an Engineer Project Manager) - ensure the minimum technical level is listed, and there may be a need for an 'advanced degree' as well, or high end of years of experience in those situations.

Jobs in the same organizational/functional area should expect to consistently 'cascade' in terms of education/experience; education may be same for a manager and its report, but the amount of experience at least should be higher, or the type of experience listed should differ, for the manager to enable them to add value and guide the unit.

(See Appendix B for a general guide. Seek additional information from your HR Client Service representative.)

Languages Section

If a position either requires the incumbent to speak an Indigenous language, or it would be a preferred ability, that information should be captured in the Languages section of the job description, as either required or preferred.

Whether required or preferred, please indicate a specific language if appropriate, using the dropdown listing in the job description.

Job Description Writing/Editing Support

We hope this guide has given you a sense of what to consider when drafting or revising a job description to remove barriers and be inclusive of Indigenous people. Information about writing job descriptions, including current JD templates, glossaries, and a writing guide are available in the Job Description Writing section of the Online Managers' Toolkit online, and through the JD Writing monthly Workshops (via Teams). Workshops are accessed through the [Learning and Development Calendar](#) online.

The JE&OD unit may also be able to assist you with planning options for your job description review project, to help you achieve the objectives as smoothly as possible.

You can connect with the Job Evaluation and Organizational Design (JE&OD) unit at their team email: job_evaluation@gov.nt.ca.



APPENDIX A

Education and Experience

During the staffing process, the Human Resources Client Services person will assist you in defining specific screening criteria based on the Typically Attained By (TAB) statement contained in the job description, prior to the review of any candidate applications or resumes.

When adding relevant education background, unless a specified educational degree is required for the roles and responsibilities of the job, you will be asked to consider what fields of study could be relevant and beneficial.

Examples of types of work and potentially relevant education:

- Social work, psychology – important for behavior change and engagement work.
- Communications and marketing – important for engagement and outreach (material development).
- Business management – developing the business case for sustainability work and communicating this to different audiences, financial modeling and cost benefit analysis.
- Education – important for outreach and engagement work (workshop design).
- Economics – data and research analysis centered on human experience.
- Public Health Administration – systems approach to various factors impacting individual experiences that support well-being.
- Multicultural studies – culturally competent communication and cross-cultural understanding.



APPENDIX B

Typically Attained By Statements

If a statement includes a required amount of years experiences in a specific area reword the statements so the language is result orientated, see the following examples below:

2 years with directly related experience of recreation and sports.	2 years with directly related experience of delivering sports and recreation programming, whether paid and/or volunteer.
Requires a minimum of three years experience working in finance.	3 years experience in a transactional financial support or business administrative role, including paid and/or volunteer. OR 3 years experience working in financial reporting, analysis or budgeting, including paid and/or volunteer.
4+ years of directly relevant and progressive experience working as a business analyst delivering complex technology enabled projects.	3 years of relevant experience delivering complex technology enabled projects.
Several years of experience writing grants.	1 year experience writing proposals for funding.