

9. REVIEW OF SCHEMES OF SERVICE AND QUALIFICATIONS

9.1 The work environment is becoming more and more dynamic with tasks/functions perpetually emerging, particularly in line with new customer requirement and technological innovation. Hence, the scheme of service which is an official document on which there is a common accord between the employer and an employee, needs to be regularly revisited to enable recruitment of officers capable of providing an effective and efficient service while remaining focussed on employees' rights, which are often the root cause of strained industrial relations. Therefore, this chapter takes a close look at the different parts of the scheme of service, recommending corrective action and also draws attention to certain parameters which need to be observed while reviewing schemes of service.

Scheme of Service

9.2 A scheme of service is an official document containing a wide array of information, particularly essential in the carrying out of HR functions. Information relating to the job title, salary scale provided and the Ministry/Department is displayed at the top of the scheme while all other information is regrouped under three main headings namely: Qualifications, Role and Responsibilities and Duties that are hereafter described.

Qualifications

9.3 Qualification is an important part of a scheme of service inasmuch as it specifies the mode of entry to the grade, the educational qualifications as well as the skills and knowledge prospective candidates should possess, the work experience they need to reckon and the personality traits and characteristics they should display. All these elements are determined, among others, on the basis of the complexity of the job and the level of duties, responsibilities and the accountability thereto attached. Problems that generally arise in this area are linked to the educational qualifications.

Equivalent Qualification

9.4 The appellation of the qualification conferred by a particular University may differ from that of another University, though the content of the course and its level may be similar. To this end, provision exists already for consideration to be given to qualifications that are held equivalent to the prescribed one by the Mauritius Qualification Authority and the Higher Education Commission. With a view not to jeopardising the chances of candidates there is, therefore, need to maintain the existing provisions.

Recommendation 1

9.5 We recommend that the practice of accepting qualifications in schemes of service that are equivalent to the prescribed one, should be maintained.

Additional Provisions

- 9.6 It has been observed that in some cases, Ministries/Departments create grades which do not fit in the existing structure, the moreso that the duties devolving upon incumbents in this grade are a duplication of duties pertaining to existing grades. In such situations, the Bureau either queries the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms (MPSAIR) or seeks its views thereon which in turn, often reverts to the Ministry/Department concerned. At times, the reply is quite expedient but more often when the justifications are not plausible or clear enough, the Bureau convenes a meeting with the relevant stakeholders to thrash out issues. This results in considerable time loss which is in contradiction to all reform measures being brought to minimise delay in the prescription of scheme of service.
- 9.7 Another important observation made is that for certain grades the array of academic qualifications prescribed is very wide. For instance, in these grades, the qualification required is a Degree in Administration, Social Work or IT. In fact, the qualifications requirement set should enable incumbents to effectively and efficiently perform their job. Therefore, when a wide array of qualification is set, it becomes questionable whether the nature of duties varies so much that incumbents holding any qualification would be able to deliver satisfactorily. Besides, the delay in prescribing schemes of service has also been raised by our stakeholders.
- 9.8 With a view to curbing the above cited problems, it is believed that a scrutiny of all these aspects should be carried out prior to submitting requests to the Bureau in relation to salary grading. Hence, we are recommending accordingly.

Recommendation 2

- 9.9 We recommend that the MPSAIR continues to scrupulously examine all proposed schemes of service for new grades as well as amendments to existing ones prior to submitting requests to the Bureau, together with its views and comments. It is also understood that the processing time for the prescription of schemes of service should be further reduced.**

Review of Qualifications for Grades at Entry Level

- 9.10 Only the highest qualifications required are specified in the schemes of service of entry grades in the Public Sector. However, exception may be made where qualification at lower level requires that a given subject be specified in view of the very nature of the duties to be performed. **Hence, present provisions should be maintained on the basis of justifications submitted by Ministries/Departments.**

Qualifications Requirements for Grade-to-Grade Promotion

- 9.11 Provisions exist for officers who, in a grade to grade situation which requires two or more qualifications, possess the highest qualifications but lack part of the lower qualifications, to be considered for promotion subject to satisfying all other requirements of the promotional grade. It is understood that this provision may still be of relevance today. Hence, we are maintaining same.

Recommendation 3

9.12 We recommend that the provision “where two or more qualifications are required for promotion; and an officer in a grade just below the promotional grade possesses the whole of the higher/highest qualification but lacks only part of the lower qualification should also be considered for promotion provided he satisfies all other requirements of the promotional grade” be maintained.

9.13 The severe impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on service delivery in the public sector called for a rethinking of the modes of operation. To ensure business continuity, appropriate adjustments in relation to the changing circumstances were contemplated and novel methods were adopted. In this context, necessary provisions have been made in the Chapter Working Week, Flexitime, Workers on Shift/Roster/Staggered Hours and Overtime and the Civil Service College is providing relevant training to this effect. In a move to formalise all the new methods of operation which aim at ensuring business continuity in a harmonised industrial atmosphere, there is need to review schemes of service of all such grades wherever applicable.

Recommendation 4

9.14 We recommend that Responsible Officers should identify all such functions where for business continuity, the delivery of service may be made from a remote location, and the grades concerned.

9.15 We further recommend that thereafter, the Responsible Officers should initiate action to review the scheme of service of the grades thus identified.

Experience

9.16 Besides academic qualifications, another element that qualifies a candidate for a post is the length of experience reckoned in a certain grade or at a certain level. This element is reflected in the scheme of service together with other job-related information. In fact, the length of service at a particular level is prescribed to ensure that candidates do possess adequate knowledge, experience and exposure to be able to deliver as expected in his/her new job. From this perspective, candidates should, therefore, possess experience in the various aspects of the job.

9.17 It has been represented that many officers remain in certain postings for long and do not get the opportunity to learn other aspects of the job. Consequently, this is a handicap to the officer competing with officers who, in other Ministries/Departments have had the said learning opportunities. Thus, the chances of appointment of the officer may be seriously jeopardised. Those officers who, notwithstanding the above, succeed in the selection exercise, often encounter difficulties in delivering efficiently and effectively.

- 9.18 In the light of the above, there is need for officers to be exposed to the various aspects of the job. Hence, we are hereunder making appropriate provision along these lines.

Recommendation 5

- 9.19 We recommend that Responsible Officers should, as far as possible, ensure that officers are made to rotate so as to make them conversant with the various aspects of the job with a view to enhancing their skills and competencies.**

- 9.20 There are many schemes of service which have not been amended for years. Advertisement for posts on the basis of these schemes involves many hassles because of the terms used. The terms Management, Middle Management, Senior Management and Top Management reflect different connotations for different organisations. For instance, the level of responsibilities and accountability at middle management level in a large organisation may be higher than those at senior management level in a small organisation. Hence, there is not a proper scale along which these elements may be effectively compared. Hence, to ensure fairness in such exercise, the use of terms which may reflect different interpretations should, as far as possible, be avoided. However, consideration may still be given to these terms in situations where the interpretation thereof does not lend itself to any ambiguity.

- 9.21 Relevant authorities have already ruled out on this issue and organisations should be cautious in the application of same.

Recommendation 6

- 9.22 We recommend that, as far as possible, the terms Management, Middle Management, Senior Management and Top Management should not be used in drafting schemes of service or in issuing advertisements.**

Recognition/Accreditation of Prior Experience

- 9.23 It has been represented that in certain grades the technical qualifications which are required are scarce. This causes an impediment in the filling of posts and thus the smooth running of the organisation. It has also been averred that employees with wide experience deliver satisfactorily and consequently, consideration could be given to them for occupying these posts. Hence, we provided for posts requiring technical qualifications which are scarce, the appointment of candidates who lack part of the technical qualification but who reckon a minimum of 10 years' relevant experience together with the necessary competence. This experience/competence has to be recognised by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) or any other recognised body to make good for the lack of the technical qualifications. As this provision may still be of relevance, **we are maintaining same.**

- 9.24 Notwithstanding the maintaining of the above provision made in an attempt to facilitating the smooth running of an organisation, it is incumbent upon the Management of these organisations to identify alternative modes of training to ensure that their staff are adequately equipped to shoulder responsibilities devolving on the said grades.

Recommendation 7

- 9.25 We recommend that Management identifies alternative modes of training/qualifications which should be submitted for consideration by the MPSAIR for the purpose of amending the scheme of service of grades requiring scarce technical qualifications.**

Grades Requiring Incumbents to be Registered with Recognised Bodies

- 9.26 In certain grades, according to the prescribed schemes of service, candidates postulating should hold those qualifications that are required for admission to membership of recognised Institutes/Bodies and should be registered therewith. Such incumbents are refunded the full amount of the annual subscription fees.
- 9.27 On the other hand, there are certain officers who, though not required to be registered with recognised Institutes/Bodies, are nevertheless registered with a view to keeping abreast of latest developments in the particular field. These officers are, subject to the approval of the Responsible Officer, granted an assistance of 75% of the annual subscription fee subject to a maximum of Rs 3575 provided the said recent developments are relevant to the duties of the officer.
- 9.28 As this provision is applicable across the whole Public Sector, a consistent application thereof is essential. In the absence of specific guidelines, each organisation tends to deal with it in its own manner and in so doing, the approach of determining the relevance of the developments to the duties might differ. Consequently, this may have a bearing on the effectiveness of the exercise. Therefore, it is considered that specific guidelines must be provided for all organisations to be able to apply it in a standard and effective manner.

Recommendation 8

- 9.29 We recommend that an officer, who, by virtue of the scheme of service of his grade, is required to be registered with a recognised Professional Institute/Body, should be refunded the full amount of annual subscription fees payable to one of the relevant professional bodies.**
- 9.30 We also recommend that an officer drawing salary in a scale, the maximum of which is not less than Rs 62700 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)

- 9.31 Continuous membership with certain professional trust/bodies is subject to the members achieving a minimum number of units of CPD every year. In this context, officers concerned are given a financial assistance of 75% of the total expenses in connection with the achievement of the relevant number of CPD units, subject to a maximum of Rs 13750 annually.
- 9.32 As the continuous membership is a core condition laid down in the scheme of service of the grade, we are maintaining this provision while revising the ceiling of the assistance given.

Recommendation 9

9.33 We recommend that:

- (a) for grades requiring membership to recognised Institutes/Bodies as per the scheme of service, where the achievement of a minimum number of CPD units is essential for continued membership, the incumbents therein should be provided a financial assistance of 75% of the total expenses in relation thereto, subject to a maximum of Rs 14450 annually.**

Technical Officers assisting Officers of the Professional Cadre

- 9.34 Presently, Technical Officers who possess qualifications that are higher than those prescribed in their schemes of service and who assist officers of the Professional Cadre, are allowed to move incrementally beyond their top salary.
- 9.35 Following the revisiting of the provisions regarding incremental credit, officers no more enjoy the benefit described above. However, officers who have previously benefitted from this recommendation are still in post and consequently, appropriate provision is being made for them.

Recommendation 10

9.36 We recommend that:

- (a) provisions allowing officers in entry grades of a Technical Cadre with a salary the maximum of which is not less than Rs 47675 to move beyond their top salary incrementally by the number of additional increments earned by virtue of the additional qualification as approved by the Standing Committee on Incremental Credit be maintained subject to:**
- (i) incumbents holding a degree or postgraduate while the qualification requirements for the entry grade is a Diploma; and**
- (ii) incumbents being required to perform part of the professional functions.**

(b) the above provisions should equally apply to officers of the Civil Service, Parastatal Bodies, Local Authorities and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Special Provisions for Graduates and Professionals

- 9.37 In hierarchies where the qualification requirement at the source grade is a degree or a professional qualification, the structure is often different from other hierarchies where incumbents may either have various avenues or more opportunities to climb up the ladder. Consequently, certain provisions were made to enable incumbents benefit from career earnings where career path, as imposed by the nature of the functions, does not allow the creation of additional levels or posts. It should also be noted that other provisions of general applicability which were implemented here also, relate to the merger of the first two levels where there is considerable overlapping of duties and the absence of effective supervision.
- 9.38 The grant of such provision is subject to incumbents having been efficient and effective in their performance during the preceding year, reflecting the culture of performance which the Bureau is endeavouring to instil in the Public Sector. As it entails a movement in the salary of incumbent, the latter needs to have drawn the top salary of his grade for a year and is not under report to be able to benefit from the said provision.
- 9.39 In the context of the Report, we have examined the whole issue and observed that there has been no consequential change in the structure of hierarchies of the abovementioned categories. The functions have not changed either while only trivial changes have been brought to the scheme of duties. As the provision is adequate to meet the objectives for which it was designed, we are, therefore, maintaining same which is hereunder reproduced with revised salary points as per the new Master Salary Scale. However, it is important to highlight that **provisions under Recommendation 11 below are restricted to grades requiring a degree or professional qualification.**

Recommendation 11

- 9.40 **We recommend that officers belonging to entry grades/promotional entry grades which require a University Degree or a recognised professional equivalent qualification and who draw salary in a scale the maximum of which is not less than Rs 62700 upon reaching the top salary of their grade, should be allowed to move incrementally in the Master Salary Scale up to salary point Rs 68000, provided that they:**
- (i) have drawn the top salary for at least 12 months;**
 - (ii) have been efficient and effective in their performance during the preceding year; and**
 - (iii) are not under report.**

- 9.41 We also recommend that officers who draw salary in a scale the maximum of which is not less than Rs 69800 and not more than Rs 97625 and who have 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 that they:**
- (i) have drawn the top salary for at least 12 months;**
 - (ii) have been efficient and effective in their performance during the preceding year; and**
 - (iii) are not under report.**
- 9.42 We further recommend that the above recommendations should also apply to corresponding flat salaries in the same range.**
- 9.43 For this Report, representations were received from incumbents in promotional grades requiring a degree, claiming certain benefits which accrue to beneficiaries belonging to other categories. After scrutiny, the Bureau has observed that a complete alignment for the benefits would not be possible. Nevertheless, we are hereby providing for some sort of compensation to them.
- 9.44 We recommend that officers belonging to promotional grades which require a University Degree or an equivalent recognised professional qualification and who draw salary in a scale the maximum of which is not less than Rs 62700 should, upon reaching the top salary of their grade, be allowed to move incrementally up to salary point Rs 64400 provided that they:**
- (i) have drawn the top salary at least 12 months;**
 - (ii) have been efficient and effective in their performance during the preceding year; and**
 - (iii) are not under report.**

Qualification Requirements

- 9.45 In the course of consultations with the official and staff side, it was highlighted that there is an increasing number of new recruits who possess qualifications that are higher than those prescribed for their grades. Consequently, those already in post tend to improve their qualification and become competitive for the next level and position themselves ahead of their competitors. Views were also expressed that the minimum qualification requirements for certain grades might not reflect what are currently required for the job.
- 9.46 We have examined all such demands and regard that a more qualified workforce certainly accentuates the pressure for an upward review of qualifications the moreso in a bid to secure a higher salary scale. It is obvious that with the improved educational system and greater access to education, more and more job applicants are obtaining a higher qualification, while the number of high skilled jobs have not increased proportionately.

- 9.47 In jobs not requiring high skills, a higher managerial control and a greater reliance on routine tasks are required where a supervisory level is essential. Whereas high skilled work is typically associated with elements of employee autonomy and decision making where a flatter structure is more appropriate. It has been observed that incumbents have requested for an upgrading in qualification as well as creation of higher grades, which generally may not be compatible.
- 9.48 From the remuneration perspective, qualifications are one among the many other compensable factors that may alter a salary grading. A change in qualification requirements alone might not necessarily be accompanied by a change in salary if the content of the job has not changed significantly. Further, qualification requirements are normally amended when there is change in the essential/core duties and responsibilities of the grade and the existing qualification requirements are not adequate for the continued performance of the job.
- 9.49 Essential/core duties should, among others, satisfy the following criteria:
- (i) the duty must be done frequently that is at least 50% of the incumbent's working time;
 - (ii) removing the duty from the job would fundamentally modify the job;
 - (iii) the grade exists to perform this duty; and
 - (iv) there would be significant consequences if this duty is not done.
- 9.50 We consider that the minimum qualification requirements for a grade should be set according to its prevalent duties and responsibilities instead of qualifications held by the incumbents and it is against this background that all requests for change in qualifications were examined and meritorious ones retained.
- 9.51 The above argument hinges on the fact that the representations were made from a salary upgrading perspective. Notwithstanding the argument, there is need for a general review in qualifications requirement, particularly to address the issue of market reality.

Recommendation 12

- 9.52 **We recommend that the competent authorities consider gradually raising the minimum qualifications requirement for entry to grades requiring a degree with salary in a scale the maximum of which is not less than Rs 62700, to a postgraduate Degree or equivalent qualification, except in scarcity areas.**
- 9.53 **The above recommendations regarding graduates and professionals should also apply to Parastatal Bodies, Local Authorities and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.**

Amendment to Scheme of Service

- 9.54 Subsequent to Recommendation made in this Report concerning scheme of service, appropriate changes need to be brought in an expedient manner to reflect same.

Hence, it is considered that necessary action should be initiated, as far as possible, **within a period of four months.**

Alignment of Scheme of Service

9.55 Generally, grades in the Parastatal Bodies, Local Authorities and Rodrigues Regional Assembly are aligned on their Civil Service counterparts in terms of salary. It is, therefore, imperative that the qualifications requirement of these grades as well as their level of duties and responsibilities be aligned too. It has been observed that in many instances, consequential amendments have not been brought following changes made in the scheme of service of grades in the Civil Service, in previous Reports. To address this issue, we are hereunder making an appropriate recommendation.

Recommendation 13

9.56 We recommend that where the salaries of identical/comparable grades in Parastatal Bodies, Local Authorities and Rodrigues Regional Assembly are aligned on those of the Civil Service, the scheme of service of these grades should, wherever relevant, be amended along similar lines as those of their Civil Service counterparts.

Qualifications Requirement - Dual Stream

9.57 Generally, the mode of appointment to a grade is either by promotion or selection. There are however, very few instances where the scheme of service specifies that the grade be filled by promotion of serving officers from the main cadre and also by selection from serving officers outside the main cadre. During consultation, the Bureau was apprised that in such cases, these posts are invariably filled by promotion and other eligible officers outside the main cadre who can compete for the higher position in the same exercise are not provided with such opportunities. Representations have, therefore, been made to address this issue such that all eligible officers be provided with opportunities to compete. **In the light of the foregoing and subject to practicability, the Bureau considers that the Ministry/Department/ Organisation concerned, after assessing its human resource requirements, should, in consultation with the relevant Commission/Authority, examine the possibility of filling vacancies from both streams.**

Trainee Grades in the Public Sector

9.58 We recommend that the MPSAIR should, after consultation with Ministries/Departments/Organisations, identify areas where Trainees are required and set up schemes for their enlistment and the terms and conditions governing them. Through this scheme, the Trainees would have to undergo training dispensed by any approved institution and acquire the right skills and competencies for appointment to the relevant grades.
