

Preparation for a Competition

Introduction

There are only two (2) promotional positions within the CPAA Bargaining Unit which must be filled using the “Competition Process”; those being a Postmaster position and the position of Senior Assistant, if not filled as per Clauses 11.04 (a) (i), (ii) and (iii).

This document has been developed to provide advice, outline the competition process, and identify the preparatory work required before appearing for a Competition Rating Board Interview. It is not possible to provide you with the questions and answers, as each rating board could consist of different board members and questions. We have tried to be as complete as possible in identifying the various areas you should study.

You will be tested in three (3) categories:

1. Knowledge
2. Abilities
3. Personal Suitabilities

You must receive a passing mark in **all three categories** in order to be considered successful in the competition. You will then be ranked in the order of the most qualified. The marks used to determine your rank are based on a combination of the ratings obtained from the Candidates Promotional Assessment Report (CPAR) and the marks you obtained from the rating board interview.

This document will provide information on:

- The Employee Information Line (EIL)
- Statement of Qualifications
- Application Form
- The Candidates Promotional Assessment Report (CPAR)
- Preparation for Interview
- Possible Areas for Competition Questions
- The Interview
- Rating/Marking Process of Board
- Notification of Competition Results

Employee Information Line (EIL)

1-800-394-4000

The Employee Information Line will be used to advertise opportunities for transfer and promotion for all Postmaster and Senior Assistant positions.

With the introduction of the Employee Information Line and changes to the CPAA collective agreement, CPAA employees will now have two opportunities to apply for a transfer. Employees will still have the opportunity to make a written request, which must be sent in advance, and this request is valid for one year. If the position is not filled by the above process, the vacancy will then be advertised on the Employee Information Line for one week, for the purpose of transfers. This will allow employees a second chance to request a transfer before the job goes to competition. If no employees request a transfer, following a waiting period of one week for the receipt of transfers, the job will then be advertised as an Opportunity for Advancement on the Employee Information Line for two weeks. It is important to note that the opportunity to transfer and the opportunity to compete will be advertised separately.

We recommend that if you are interested in transferring, competing, or both, you establish a schedule where you can monitor the job listings on the Employee Information Line. The jobs on the information line are updated every Monday, so in your planning, it is important that you call on a weekly basis. Applications and/or transfer requests will be accepted based on the postmark on the envelope.

If you are interested in competing for a position advertised on the EIL **we recommend that you ask for a Statement of Qualifications**, you may also request that a competition poster be sent to you.

Statement of Qualifications

The Statement of Qualifications is the basis for:

- 1) Advertising job opportunities
- 2) Screening applicants
- 3) Rating of candidates

A Statement of Qualifications consists of two components: basic requirements and rated requirements.

The following is a **sample** Statement of Qualifications for a Postmaster – Semi-Staff (English)

Basic Requirements

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Education: | Completion of secondary school, i.e., 12 years of schooling or provincial equivalent; or provincial equivalency tests and/or demonstrated business experience. |
| Training & Experience: | Acceptable training and/or experience in processing mail, in providing postal services and in supervision. |
| Language Requirement: | A knowledge of English is essential for this position. |

Rated Requirements

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Knowledge: | Knowledge of the geographic area of the postal region served. Knowledge of regulations, methods and procedures for processing mail and providing postal services. Knowledge of post office accounting systems. |
| Abilities: | Ability to set priorities, resolve customer problems, train staff, and assess staff performance. Ability to organize, schedule and control postal services. Ability to collect, safeguard and account for postal revenue. Ability to maintain records and prepare reports. Ability to perform physical work such as lifting mail containers, pushing or pulling boxes, stacking and sorting mail, and standing for extended periods of time. |
| Personal Suitability: | Effective interpersonal relationships particularly in dealing with customer complaints. Dependability, tact and cooperativeness. |

Application Form

Request an Application Form from your Postmaster or from the immediate supervisor for your post office.

Complete the application form carefully, filling in all the applicable areas. It is essential to identify that you meet all the essential qualifications as identified on the statement of qualifications.

For example: TRAINING & EXPERIENCE: Acceptable training and/or experience in processing mail, in providing postal services and in supervision. If you do not, for example, state that you have had **supervision experience**, the Corporation may screen you out from the competition for not meeting the essential qualifications. Remember that Canada Post takes into consideration your work experiences outside of the Corporation therefore, any job or voluntary service you have performed in your community will be considered.

A résumé of all achievements, voluntary or otherwise, showing community involvement, leadership qualities, supervisory capabilities, and experience should be included with your application.

For your own records, keep a photocopy of all of the above. Mail the application to the address shown on the competition poster, or as advised by the EIL, by Priority Courier or Xpresspost (signature is recommended), so you have proof that the application was sent.

Within a reasonable amount of time, you will receive notification from Canada Post Corporation that your application has been received and accepted. You will also be notified if your application was not accepted for that competition and the reasons why. In the event your application is not accepted, we recommend you immediately contact your Local Union Representative for discussion and advice.

If your application is accepted, the notification will advise you that you will be contacted again in the near future as to the date and location of the interview.

Candidate Promotional Assessment Report (CPAR)

Each accepted candidate, within the CPAA bargaining unit, trying for a position, must have a CPAR completed on them by their immediate supervisor, and overall approved by the supervisor's immediate superior.

In the case of an Assistant, the report will be made by his/her Postmaster and his /her immediate Supervisor, in the case of a Postmaster, by his/her immediate supervisor and the supervisor's immediate superior.

This four (4) page document will address the Corporation's everyday work assessment on you, **in your current position**, in the following areas:

Basic Requirements Factor

Acceptable training and/or experience in processing mail, providing postal service and supervision. This will address your previous work history and demonstrate your performance in your present position. The assessment will comment on the training you have received or the training you require, and in your ability to supervise, or lack thereof.

Knowledge Factor

Regulations, methods, and procedures for processing mail, providing postal service, and post office financial accounting systems. The assessment must explain the rating received by addressing the demonstrated knowledge you have on the regulations, methods, procedures, and financial-cash account system.

Abilities Factor

Organize, schedule and control postal services, to collect, safeguard and account for postal services, to set priorities, to sell postal products, resolve operating and customer problems, to train and assess staff performances, and to maintain records and prepare reports. The assessment should address your strengths and weaknesses in relation to the responsibilities of the position.

Personal Suitability Factor

Perform effective interpersonal relationships dealing with customer complaints, your dependability, attendance, tact, and cooperativeness. The assessment will address your personal ability to handle conflict, problem solving-resolution, and conduct.

Your supervisor will give you a rating (%) for very poor, poor, fair, good, very good, or exceptional. The written assessment should reflect the rating you were given. Each section will be completed in this manner and then signed and dated by the immediate supervisor. The report will then be reviewed by the supervisor's superior for comment, date and signature. The assessment report will then be given to you to assess.

Upon receipt of your assessment, you have three (3) days to study it. You can make notes of any concerns, disagreements or lack of information in the "Employee's Comments" area of the form.

You can then discuss the contents of your assessment with your supervisor, and if you have any further comments to enter, you can do so at that time. Date and sign the report and give it back to your immediate supervisor.

The report will be forwarded to the Chairperson of the interview rating board.

Preparation for the Interview

The preparation process should start immediately following your application to compete.

The “Statement of Qualification” you requested will tell you the general areas you will be tested in. Gain as much knowledge as possible about the operation, geographical area the office serves, and the position you are applying for.

Some examples could be:

- 1) Does this office handle Publications/Periodical mailings?
- 2) Does this office use the PPIC system (Postage Paid in Cash)? (Business – Large Volume Mailers)
- 3) Does this office have General Delivery, Lock Boxes, Contracted Services (Rural Routes, Group Mail Boxes, Community Mail Boxes, Kiosks, etc.)?
- 4) What is the DCF (Distributing Centre Facility) for this office?
- 5) Does it process mail (call for items) for Retail Postal Outlet (RPO)?

If you are unfamiliar with any of the criteria, operations and services, particular to this office, study and learn all you can on those issues. Read Canada Post Corporation manuals and ask questions from someone you know and trust who is knowledgeable in the field.

Know how to deal with an irate customer or a personal conflict between two staff members in your office. Be familiar with and have knowledge of the “Corporate Manual System,” which covers policies and practices on:

- 1) Products and Services,
- 2) Collection and Delivery,
- 3) Processing of mail,
- 4) Operating and Accounting Procedures.

Further information may be obtained from the Postal Guide, and the CPC / CPAA collective agreement.

Practice writing a business type letter to an upset customer, or an information letter to customers regarding a change in their mail service.

Further to examples 1-5:
(on previous page)

This information can be found by consulting:

Canada Post Web Site www.canadapost.ca,

Telephone directory,

Provincial map,

Canada Post Supervisor
for both your area and/or the area
in which the position you are applying for is located.

Categories for Competition Questions

Knowledge Factor

In the area of knowledge, you could be asked questions on any of the following:

- Regulations, methods and procedures for processing mail
- Regulations, methods and procedures for providing postal products and services
- Corporate accounting system
- ROSS / Casio Systems

The questions asked in this section are referenced in Corporate manuals, guides, and directives. It is not possible to list all Canada Post products and services, the following is a few of the areas that could be used for questions:

Cash Account, Work Sheet of Audit and Supporting Documents

Banking

Reports: (CPAA Time report, Postal Requisitions, Postal Stores Requisitions, non-postal items, Revenue, Householder, Detail Sheet of Travel, Lock Box, “A Lists”, Post Office Key Record, Inspection Records – to name a few)

Debits/Credits

Surplus Cash

Lock Box and Key

Security of Funds/Stock/Security of Office

Property Maintenance Program

Bag Service

Priority Courier/Puroletter Puropak

Xpresspost/Xpress parcel/Regular Parcel (Domestic & USA) expedited?

Registered Mail

Xpresspost International

Letter Rates (Standard, Domestic, USA, International)

Insured Mail, Indemnity

Redirection Services/Cost

Publications/Periodicals

Postage Paid In Cash (PPIC)

Postage Metres in offices

AdMail over the counter contract/non contract

Money Orders

Trace Mail Data Capture (Gathering and Batching)

Customs Postal Import

Electronic Mail

ET CETERA.....

The Corporation will be assessing how knowledgeable you are in the products and services they provide and in the general operations of the post office.

Abilities Factor

This category assesses your abilities to:

- Organize, schedule and control postal services
- Collect, safeguard and account for postal services
- Set priorities, resolve operating problems
- Resolve customer problems
- Train staff and assess staff performance
- Maintain records
- Prepare reports

Personal Suitability Factor

This category addresses your personal suitability regarding:

- Effective interpersonal relationships, particularly in dealing with customer complaints
- Dependability
- Tact
- Cooperativeness

Letter writing

It is quite possible that part of your interview process may consist of the board requesting you to write a letter to one of your customers in relationship to an enquiry, complaint or notification of change in service.

The Corporation will be looking for a business type letter addressing the concern or problem, the corrective action, and the standard statement regarding the value and regard the Corporation has for its customers. We suggest that you use the format already in practice by the Corporation and tailor it to your own needs.

Interview

You will receive notification from the Corporation as to the date, time, and location of your interview. Be on time for your interview, and be neat and clean in your appearance. It is normal to be nervous. Be friendly, open, alert, and attentive. If you have a problem understanding any question, ask to have the question repeated, and take the time you need. If you want to by-pass a question for the time being and come back to it later, just ask them if you can do so. All candidates, for said competition, will be asked the same questions, chosen from a CPC / CPAA approved bank of questions. All interviews will be held in the same manner. (i.e., face-to-face or in exceptional cases, by telephone.)

When responding to the Board, speak clearly, calmly and try to make eye contact with the person who asked you the question. They are writing down your responses.

When responding to a question, which may entail several different steps, try to imagine in your mind, each detailed step you would take, and relate to the board each step you are envisioning in your mind. Don't take it for granted that the board knows that you know how to do the task from start to finish as they will only record and rate you on what you have said.

A rating board will consist of at least two (2) members, to a maximum of three (3). Where feasible, it is recommended that the board consist of a person from staffing, a person from management such as your Local Area Manager or their designate and a **CPAA member** with an equivalent or higher classification level than the position for which the interview is being conducted.

Part of the interview process can be oral and part can be written. That decision rests solely with the board.

Showing confidence in yourself and your capabilities goes a long way with personal impressions.

Points to remember:

Example question:
Walk through the steps
of simple purchase of stamps.

Customer requests postage.
You must determine denomination and amount.

Is a receipt required?
Give customer stamps and then
you must collect the money
to complete the transaction.

All very obvious, but if you do not tell the interviewer(s)
what to write down,
you will not receive proper scoring.

Rating/Marking Process of Board

All candidates, in order to be considered qualified or receive a passing mark, must obtain 60% of the allocated points, in each of the factors listed below.

N.B. To be consistent, the following weighting will apply:

i.e.: Knowledge 20%, Abilities 40%, Personal Suitability 40% = 100%

Knowledge Factor

20% of total test marks plus 10% of maximum points allotted to knowledge factor from your Candidate Promotional Assessment Report. Overall results must equal 60% to be considered qualified or receive passing mark.

Abilities Factor

40% of total test marks plus 30% of maximum points allocated to abilities factor from your Candidate Promotional Assessment Report. Overall results must equal 60% to be considered qualified or receive passing mark.

Personal Suitability Factor

40% of total test marks plus 70% of maximum points allocated to Personal Suitability Factor from your Candidate Promotional Assessment Report. Overall results must equal 60% to be considered qualified or receive passing mark.

Notification of Competition Results

The Corporation will advise you by letter of the results within thirty (30) days of the competition as per Clause 11.06 (e) of the CPC/CPAA Collective Agreement.

Do not be disappointed in yourself if you were not the person selected, rather, find out where you were weak and improve in that area.

Any candidate in the competition may contact the Chairperson of the board and request a Post Board Interview. This must be done within 25 days of being notified of the competition results to ensure meeting the time frames for filing of possible grievance.

At the post board interview, you will be given access to your answers recorded by the members of the board. You will also have access to the “expected or correct answers”. You will be able to discuss fully any concerns or disputes in marks allotted you.

You may discuss the questions asked, your answers, the expected answers, and the marks given to you. You may make notes of your interview on where you fell short, however, you will not be allowed to write down the questions and answers. Should you feel that you were not fairly assessed, contact your local Branch Union Representative and discuss it with him or her. They will be able to advise you of what, if any, further action should be taken or considered.

It is very important to know that the Corporation can request a financial security check on any potential employee. The Corporation has the legal right to do so, however, they must receive your consent to authorize this review. The outcome of the financial review can, and has been, a determining factor for some appointments. If you receive an unfavourable review, for example a recent bankruptcy, the Corporation may consider you a financial risk, and has the right to refuse to appoint you to the position even if you did exceedingly well in the competition process.

In conclusion, we hope that this document has helped you to be totally prepared for the challenge of a possible new career with the Corporation, and has given you the confidence to accomplish anything you set your mind to.

The Union, through your local Branch Representatives, is available to assist you in any way possible and extend to you sincere best wishes in your endeavours.