



**Officials Council**

**STANDARDS  
OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS  
WITH SELECTION CRITERIA AND  
METHODS OF QUALIFICATION TESTING  
FOR POSITION OFFICIALS IN STATE ADMINISTRATION**

**adopted on the basis of  
the first paragraph of Article 178 of the Civil Servants Act  
(Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia,  
Nos. 63/2007 – official consolidated text – and 65/2008);  
pursuant to the Resolution of the Officials Council adopted at  
its sessions on 8 November 2010, 9 December 2013 and 11 April 2016  
in force as of**

**1 May 2016\***

**\*applicable to all special open competitions published after 1 May 2016**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

With regard to the standards of professional qualifications and criteria, the Officials Council defines the **desired profile of position officials in state administration** by determining the experience, knowledge and skills required. A distinction is made between:

• **common standards** for position officials defined in **this Act**; and  
• additional standards for individual bodies or services which are the subject of the competition for the selection of a position official (if so required by the nature of the body's or service's work) are defined, if necessary, when the text of the open competition for an individual body or service is drawn up.

By defining the methods for qualification testing, the Officials Council determines a **uniform manner of testing candidates' qualifications performed by special competition commissions in competition procedures.**

The Officials Council adopts the standards of professional qualifications, selection criteria and the methods of qualification testing for position officials in public administration **on the basis of Article 178 of the Civil Servants Act**, whereby the present Act, adopted at its session on 11 April 2016, takes into consideration and simultaneously **revises the standards, selection criteria and testing methods adopted at its sessions on 8 November 2010 and 9 December 2013.**

In addition to conditions prescribed by law or implementing regulations or the act on job systematisation (i.e. education, work experience, professional examination, knowledge of a foreign language and other conditions), these standards define **in a uniform manner for individual categories** of position officials (directors-general and secretaries-general in ministries, heads of bodies within ministries, heads of administrative units and heads of government services) the following two **basic sets** of standards:

- 1. Experience and management skills;**
- 2. Professional knowledge.**

All categories of position officials must meet the standards of professional qualifications according to sets and within a set according to elements, as provided by the criteria and conditions. A special competition commission, therefore, **takes into consideration the nature of the position, institution or organisational unit headed by the position official, in particular its role in the administrative system, its mission, method of operation and size.**

The standards of professional qualifications must provide support to competition commissions in the selection of suitable human resources. It is essential that standards result in a **uniform** and, to the greatest extent possible, professional **approach** in candidate selection procedures.

**Targeted selection** is of vital importance, since it enables those heads who initiate an open competition to receive applications from the best candidates available and to have them selected for appointment to positions. The increasing professionalism of the competition group is reflected in the selection of the most professional candidate. However, a **professional and unbiased procedure along with its outcome** can only be achieved on the basis of criteria and methods which are clearly defined in advance. The purpose of these standards is also to strike a **balance** between the expected level of experience, skills and knowledge demonstrated by the candidates by combining elements which are indivisible and eliminate references to administrative compliance with the former criteria and methods. Last but not least, the objective of these standards is to **improve the leadership culture** in state administration and to introduce understanding and the practical application of the concept of **social responsibility** in individual bodies and throughout the public administration.

**The standards of professional qualifications are tools which enable us to select the most suitable candidate for the post of a position official in state administration – who will demonstrate professional knowledge in the work of a body and leadership or management skills.**

## 2 RECOMMENDED SELECTION PROCEDURE FOR POSITION OFFICIALS

Standards of professional qualifications can have an optimum effect if position officials are selected in an integrated **manner by engaging all the stakeholders in the selection procedure**, in particular the Government of the Republic of Slovenia as the organisation at the top of the state administration, the head who initiates the open competition for a vacant post of a position official, the Officials Council and special competition commissions.

In light of this, the Officials Council recommends that the selection procedure is conducted in four basic steps. The **first, third and fourth steps all fall under the responsibility of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the head** who initiated the open competition, whereas **this Act defines the standards, criteria and methods in the part referring to the powers of special competition commissions in the second step**. The first, third and fourth steps are not mandatory under the Civil Servants Act, but are recommended by expert guidelines in human resources management, whereas the second step is conducted in line with the Civil Servants Act and the acts adopted on its basis.

### Step 1:

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the head of the position official may define the profile of the expected candidate for the specific post of a position official, taking into account the specifics of the field, the scope of the body's work, its role in the state administration system and, in a broader context, the scope of activities and the size of the body, the topical significance of the body and its tasks at the time of the competition and during the official's term of office, and similar.

In the publically published text of the competition, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the head of the position official define any potential competencies a candidate is expected to have in addition to the formal conditions and general standards set forth under the present Act.

### Step 2:

The candidate selection procedure is conducted by a special competition commission in the following manner: firstly, the commission verifies if the candidates meet the formal criteria; secondly, it verifies if those who meet the formal criteria are suitable. The suitability is established by verifying compliance with standards and criteria according to the present Act and any potential additional criteria in line with the open competition.

A special competition commission provides the head who initiated the open competition with a list of suitable candidates who meet all the conditions, standards and criteria under the regulations, the present Act and the text of the competition. See Figure 1.

**Step 3:**

Before a candidate is selected from among the suitable candidates, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia or the head who initiated the competition may test the candidates' personal leadership competencies (e.g. leadership, commitment and motivation, self-control, determination, a relaxed attitude, openness, creativity, a result-oriented approach, efficiency, readiness to consult and negotiate, the ability to resolve conflicts and crises, reliability, respect for values, ethics, etc.).

**Step 4:**

For a candidate thus appointed, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the head of the position official may check the efficiency of the candidate's work after a certain period of time has elapsed, according to the defined and expected competencies or criteria under the regulations, this Act or the competition.

This step is aimed at establishing that the conditions, standards and criteria are correct. If the candidates proposed by the special competition commissions as suitable candidates in terms of their professional qualifications prove to be successful at their work, this in turn implies that the standards meet the expectations.

The findings of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the head of the position official, customer or client satisfaction, partner satisfaction, organisational climate and employee satisfaction, public opinion, the results of the candidate's and body's work evaluated with objective indicators, are considered in this step in the context of the attainment of the objectives set in the competition, and in the context of the vision presented in the selection procedure.

**Figure 1: Course of procedure for the selection of candidates (second step)**

**1. BODY, GOVERNMENT**

selection guidelines

2. decision issued to candidates who do not meet competition conditions and hence do not qualify for selection procedure

**3. SPECIAL COMPETITION COMMISSION**

4. HIGH OFFICIAL TO WHOM POSITION OFFICIAL REPORTS

5. selection of the most suitable candidate

6. government decision

7. candidates' applications in open competition are received

8. assessment sheet is harmonised in advance

9. LIST OF SUITABLE CANDIDATES FOR POSITION ACCORDING TO STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (letter from special competition commission)

10. resolution on placement on the list of suitable candidates in terms of professional qualifications

11. invitation issued to candidates who meet competition conditions to attend an interview before a special competition commission

**12. SELECTION PROCEDURE**

special competition commissions

ASSESSMENT SHEET

13. resolution that the candidate is not placed on the list of suitable candidates in terms of professional qualifications

**14. MINUTES OF INTERVIEWS**

### **3 SELECTION PROCEDURE OF THE SPECIAL COMPETITION COMMISSION – SELECTION CRITERIA AND METHODS OF QUALIFICATIONS TESTING**

Qualifications are tested by a special competition commission in the open competition procedure for the post of a position official. The suitability of the candidate is established with this method according to individual sets of a standard. The special competition commission conducts the selection in three main phases, whereby **formal conditions in phase 1 must be met in order to proceed to the next phase.** The phases of the procedure and the methods of verifying conditions, standards and criteria include:

#### **Phase 1: Verification of the fulfilment of formal conditions for the position published in the open competition**

**Method:** Review and examination of documents and certificates submitted by the candidate in his/her application.

#### **Phase 2: Evaluation on the basis of standards and criteria**

**Methods:** Review and examination of documents and certificates submitted by the candidate in his/her application, interview with the candidate, written tests (management skills, professional knowledge), review of optional references, general checks of practical cases, assessments by a professional institution, and similar. For the evaluation of individual elements, the special competition commission chooses one of these methods at its own discretion.

#### **Phase 3: Decision on candidate's suitability according to individual elements of the two sets of standards under the present Act and a final decision on candidate's suitability**

**Methods:** Expert evaluation and, as a rule, a unanimous decision of the members of the special competition commission.

A special competition commission follows the following steps:

#### **a) An assessment of the candidate according to individual elements of both sets of standards with the following marks:**

- **Suitable (S)**, if the candidate fulfils or surpasses the expected requirements arising from the general acts in the field concerned, the open competition and this Act, by providing either good, very good or excellent answers to the element's questions; and
- **Unsuitable (U)**, if the candidate does not fulfil the expected requirements arising from the general acts in the field concerned, the open competition and this Act, by providing no answers, wrong answers or incomplete answers, inconsistent answers or answers unsuitable in any other way;

**b) An assessment of the candidate as a suitable (S) or unsuitable (U) candidate in general for each set of standards**, whereby a candidate is considered suitable in a set, if he/she is **assessed as suitable in each of the two elements of this set;**

**c) An assessment of the candidate as suitable or unsuitable** on the basis of his/hersuitability in the two sets of standards, whereby a candidate is considered suitable if he/she is assessed as suitable in both sets – each set represents approximately 50% of the total mark in assessing the candidate's suitability.

The members of a special competition commission may use the assessment sheet in the form of a **table** attached to this Act as an assessment tool.

#### **4 SETS AND ELEMENTS OF STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Standards of professional qualifications apply to all posts of position officials. A standard, as a rule, defines the type, level or scope of requirements for the post of a position official.

The standards are divided into two main sets and each set is further divided into two elements. The two main sets are:

- 1. Experience and management skills and**
- 2. Professional knowledge.**

#### **SET 1: EXPERIENCE AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

Elements:

##### **a) Scope and quality of work and leadership experience as well as leadership and management skills**

The candidate should demonstrate several aspects of this element, namely:

- scope and quality of work experience**

As a rule, the candidate should have three years of work experience in the field in which he/she is applying for a post or in a related field from the public or private sector. The subject matter of a field covered by a body in which the candidate is applying for the head post is taken into consideration as work experience. As work experience it shall be taken into consideration the experience acquired during the employment contract as well as the experience acquired on the basis of some other contract relationship such as service contract or author's contract if they correspond to the required degree in terms of how demanding is the work in the position for which the candidate applies and submits evidences.



- **scope and quality of leadership experience**

As a rule, the candidate should have three years of leadership experience in the field in which he/she is applying for a post or in a related field from the public or private sector.

The experience at least similar in scope to that of the leadership of a body in which the candidate is applying for the head post is taken into consideration as leadership experience (e.g. approximately the same number of employees, clients, work processes, of how demanding the work is, and degree of independence in leadership and management). It is necessary to evaluate the experience in the financial field as well as in the field of labour law considering the experience in making decisions about rights and obligations arising out of the employment relationship of the employees.

- **leadership and management skills**

The candidate should demonstrate several aspects of **leadership skills**, namely:

- Work flexibility , in particular communication (a knowledge of foreign languages, verbal skills, public performance, listening skills, communication with external and internal publics, dispute resolution, non-verbal communication), the implementation and optimisation of procedures (to streamline, shorten and simplify procedures), creativity (strategic and developmental thinking, to be open to new ideas, to propose efficient work methods, and similar), the actual implementation (to set clear and realistic goals for yourself and your co-workers, to persist with the work undertaken, to overcome barriers, to "transpose" strategic goals into operational goals, and to delegate tasks);
- Development of an organisational climate – the candidate focuses on the key elements concerning the approach made to improve interpersonal relations in the body and the establishment of good relationships with clients.

In the assessment of **management skills**, emphasis is placed on the management of human and financial resources and an innovative approach. A candidate must demonstrate what needs to be taken into account when goals are set and strategies defined (i.e. available resources, legislative aspects and potential developments in the field concerned). For the assessment of management skills, the following skills are primarily taken into consideration:

- Strategic planning, conceptual thinking and the creation of systemic solutions, including the drawing up of plans in a body (setting goals and defining strategies, methodologies, etc.);
- Managing human, financial and other resources;
- Organisational skills: organising his/her own work, monitoring the work of a body

and other stakeholders in the field concerned, establishing links between employees, groups and stakeholders, as well as detecting and resolving conflicts;

- Monitoring the effects of work, i.e. checking the effects of work performed by coworkers and the overall results achieved by a body.

The commission evaluates this element by interviewing the candidate and examining the documents submitted by the candidate in the selection procedure, with practical exercises allowing the candidate to demonstrate his/her leadership skills and also by testing on the request of the head who published the competition.

The greater the scope of work and leadership experience (unless otherwise stipulated by the competition elements) and the level of leadership and management skills demonstrated, the better the assessment of the candidate's suitability.

## **b) Value of development vision of a body**

A candidate submits in writing his/her vision of the priorities and future development for the body for a term of office of five years, including the methods of resource management to be used in the body for the head post of which he/she is applying for. A candidate submits the vision upon application, in line with the Rules on the work of special competition commissions.

The commission evaluates his/her written vision and the candidate may supplement this afterwards during an interview with the commission, at which the following is primarily examined:

- **Professional reasoning of the vision** based on an analysis of the situation and needs in the field under the responsibility of a body for the head post of which the candidate is applying;
- **Usefulness and feasibility of the vision** based on a comparison of goals, tasks and available resources, requirements and restrictions of regulations applicable in the field concerned and social reality.

The vision must be approximately at least two A4 pages and at most five A4 pages in length and it must be evident it's a copyright work.

The vision must comprise the following parts:

- A definition of the subject matter of the vision – the vision must specify the candidate's contribution to the development of the body and field during the relevant term of office, particularly priority goals for work, the activities to be undertaken which are aimed at achieving these goals and measurable indicators that these goals have been achieved;'

- An approximate timeline for the implementation of the proposed vision and an explanation of the timeline, i.e. a definition of the steps to be taken, changes required in the set period of time which would bring the organisation closer to the goals of its vision, and the financial, human resources and other consequences of the proposed changes, or a definition of the resources necessary to implement the vision, from the introduction of a novelty to the establishment of the desired situation in line with the proposed vision.

The following aspects are assessed:

- Is the vision based on the candidate's professional knowledge in the field of work?
- Is the vision based on the known achievements and successes of the body and does it take the body's potential into account?
- Does the vision take into account the requirements and expectations of the environment and all stakeholders involved?
- Does the vision highlight the problems which require priority action and priority tasks for the next five years?
- Can the vision be launched by the body immediately?
- Does the vision of the organisation comply with the legislation in force?
- Is the vision set out in broader terms than the present operations of the organisation and would the users welcome the proposed expanded vision?
- Would the vision motivate employees to improve the quality of their work?

The better the professional basis of the vision, the more realistic its implementation and the more proactive or ambitious the vision, the better the assessment of the candidate's suitability.

## **SET 2: PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

**Elements:**

### **c) Knowledge of the field of work and understanding the body's mission and its role in the system**

The candidate's **professional knowledge in the field covered by the body** in which he/she is applying for the head post is verified. There are several aspects of this element, namely:

- Knowledge of the powers of the body pursuant to the legislation in the field concerned, in particular knowledge of the prescribed scope of work and basic tasks in the field concerned,;
- Connections with other bodies and institutions or stakeholders;
- Understanding of national legislation in the field concerned

- Understanding of European Union legislation in the field concerned

**Understanding the body's mission within the public administration system or authority** is verified in the context of independence and networking and a coordinated action together with related or networked bodies and organisations at national and European Union levels, in particular

- Understanding of the body's mission in terms of the public interest;
- Demonstrating an understanding of the concept of social responsibility and its implementation through the body's operations;
- Knowledge of the development orientation of the state administration with an emphasis on the nature of tasks and the placement of the body, in which the candidate is applying for the head post, in the system, whereby a user-centred approach, openness and transparency, and efficiency at work are primarily taken into consideration; this is verified through knowledge of the development strategy of the state administration, progress achieved in recent years, personal views on the development of the state administration and the body, and similar.

The commission evaluates this element by interviewing the candidate and examining the documents submitted by the candidate in the selection procedure. The more knowledge and innovation demonstrated, the better the assessment of the candidate's suitability taking into consideration also personal professional standing and recognition in the field concerned, which the candidate demonstrates by way of a potential professional bibliography in the field concerned, references from distinguished persons or institutions, leadership or participation in major projects in the field of the body's work or a related field, and similar.

#### **d) Knowledge of resource planning and use**

The candidate's knowledge of **planning and the use of human and budgetary resources** in the state administration in general and specifically in the body in which he/she is applying for the head post, is verified with an emphasis on:

- Knowledge of the regulations and procedures which govern the planning of human resources policies and staffing (i.e. employment, promotion, remuneration, annual interviews, evaluation, training, etc.) in the context of the civil servant system and wages in the public sector;
- Knowledge of the regulations and procedures which govern the planning of budgetary funds and the lawful and efficient use of these funds;
- Understanding the significance and use of other resources (i.e. knowledge, ICT equipment, premises, etc.).

The commission evaluates this element by interviewing the candidate and examining the documents submitted by the candidate in the selection procedure.

The more knowledge demonstrated, the better the assessment of the candidate's suitability.

Dr. Janez STARE  
CHAIR OF THE OFFICIALS COUNCIL

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Enclosure: Table of the sets, elements, sub-elements and assessments of standards of professional qualifications