

2019 November 22

**To:** Councillor Keating

**From:** Carla Male CFO and Human Resources

**Re: Administrative Inquiry – Hiring Practices**

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Previously, I asked Administration a number of questions regarding the City of Calgary recruitment process (AI2018-04). Administration stated that the City applies the principles of merit, objectivity and consistency as per its Employment Policy (HR-031C). Administration stated that the City's selection process considered four qualifications equally: education, training, experience and ability. It stated that if two internal candidates emerged as the top candidates for union positions and compared relatively equally, only then was seniority a consideration.

Administration concluded that candidates are required to provide proof of qualifications, such as education and that internationally-trained candidates are asked to provide Canadian equivalences for their qualifications. Administration also stated that the recruitment process is subject to continuous improvement and that in 2015, HR undertook comprehensive research on best practice recruiting practices. Administration stated that tools were modified and added, imbedding four essential behaviors – competence, character, commitment and collaboration – into these tools. Administration further added that online screening was improved so that supervisors received an unbiased ranking of applications, while Administration stated that improvements in 2018 were continuing to make improvements to reduce unconscious bias.

However, I have recently heard concerns regarding potential bias in hiring practices, while barriers to entry may be in place for internationally educated applicants and skilled immigrant workers.

The recruitment and selection process at The City of Calgary (The City) is standardized and structured. Hiring managers receive training in recruitment and selection, and this training focuses on meeting the standards of legislation, City policies, collective agreements, and ethics. Following The City's process ensures that Hiring Supervisors are in compliance with these elements, and that they are attending to their managerial/supervisory responsibilities. The City embraces certain fundamental principles which directly influence the way positions are filled. These principles include merit, objectivity, and consistency. They are defined by The City's [Employment Policy \(HR-031\)](#):

*Merit Principle*

- Recruitment and selection decisions are based on the person's desirable traits and ability to perform effectively in a position.

### *Objectivity Principle*

- Selection criteria are to be developed in an objective and non-discriminatory fashion and must be job-related.

### *Consistency Principle*

- Selection systems and approaches will ensure that all candidates are treated in a fair and consistent manner and will not provide any special privilege or consideration to a specific group or individual.

Job postings are designed around the required qualifications for the job, as well as defined assets. All assessments are based on the same key expectations for the job – the knowledge, skills, and abilities required. Some essential qualifications are expressed as competencies, and all assessments are based on the requirements of the posting. For example, the online screening questions, telephone prescreens, interviews, assessments, and references all assess the individual for the same competencies required in the job. Interviews follow a structured behavioural based format, with a defined rating system. This style of interview allows individuals to tell their own story and describe their own experiences.

#### **1. Has The City undertaken any analysis to evaluate whether the hiring process indirectly discriminates against foreign-educated applicants?**

- This type of analysis, and specific work with immigrant agency partners, was done for several years prior to 2012. This led to the creation of resources and tools for applicants on calgary.ca. Simultaneously, specific information on credentialing was created for hiring managers.
- Since 2018, The City has been reviewing recruitment to reduce unconscious bias for all applicants, including internationally-trained individuals. We have made changes to encourage such applicants, and recently added the following statement to all postings: *"We value diversity of expertise, talent and opinion which creates an innovative and collaborative environment. We are committed to a respectful and inclusive workplace, and welcome applications from all qualified individuals."* We continue to make changes to decrease bias.
- The City has been involved with CRIEC (Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council) since 2009, and have used this involvement and speaking opportunities from immigrant-serving agencies, to keep ourselves apprised of newcomer issues.

#### **2. Do City screening processes account for the potential non-linear professional progression immigrants to Alberta may experience navigating the immigration system?**

- Our screening recognizes an accredited degree or diploma from institutes outside of Canada, if the individual has their Canadian equivalency document.
- The City recognizes that individuals may need to achieve Alberta or Canadian designations from Alberta and assesses them for positions on the basis of their

degree and experience. For example, there are engineers with accredited engineering degrees from other countries who are working in engineering technical positions while they work towards their P Eng designations. (Assessed by APEGA).

- City hiring managers are expected to include all experience in their selection, no matter where or when the experience was obtained, so professional experience from a non-Canadian country will be assessed as relevant experience.
- The City's recruitment and selection training has references to internationally-trained individuals. In 2018, City recruitment and selection was reviewed to determine how inclusive it is for different populations, including internationally-trained individuals. Human Resources is also currently working with an Indigenous subject matter expert to incorporate more inclusivity for Indigenous applicants.
- Human Resources is using the research listed above to inform a new recruitment and selection course, which focuses more on strategic decision making, reduction of unconscious bias, and incorporation of an inclusive approach, aware and sensitive to a variety of applicants. This concept of a 'non-linear' career path for internationally-trained applicants will be included as one of several considerations with regards to diversity and inclusion.

**3. Does The City recognize university degrees from accredited institutions within the Commonwealth, notably institutions located in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, as equivalent to a degree from a Canadian institution?**

- The City assesses equivalencies from all countries outside of Canada by using qualified agencies to do this – i.e. a member of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada. IQAS (International Qualifications Assessment Service) is one of 6 members. Some professional associations also make the determination of equivalency. For example, the Canadian Institute of Planners has a reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom, that Canadian and UK planning degrees are recognized by both countries as equivalent.

**Does The City recognize a university degree from an accredited American school as equivalent to a degree from a Canadian institution?**

- These degrees are assessed in the same manner that other non-Canadian degrees are assessed.

**4. Does The City account for the time it may take to obtain educational equivalencies for foreign-educated applicants and is this process required for positions not requiring a specialized certification/degree?**

- Yes, internationally-educated applicants who are selected for a position are provided with a conditional letter of offer, which requires them to obtain a Canadian Credential Assessment within a period of time. IQAS is currently taking 20 weeks to process applications.

- In 2015, changes were made to Canadian immigration, which require individuals to have an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) from a designated organization to validate their certificates, diplomas, and degrees against Canadian equivalencies. Economic and skilled immigrant class individuals are now arriving in Canada with their equivalency documents.
- If a given position does not require certification or a degree, then the individual does not have to obtain an equivalency.

**5. Does The City require an International Qualifications Assessment Service recognition if a credential is deemed equivalent in the International Education Guide for the Assessment of Education, notably from Commonwealth countries and the United States?**

- Yes, an official Canadian Credential Assessment is required for all countries, even those with International Education Guides, as The City does not have the expertise to interpret an international qualification without validation.

**6. Does The City see a risk in moving its hiring process to a more competency-based system for jobs that do not require stringent professional certifications (i.e. P.Eng., CPA, etc.)?**

- As The City is a large public organization, recruitment and selection is performed in a structured manner to promote equity. Over a period of years, Human Resources has promoted the acceptance of equivalencies, a balance of academic qualifications with experience. However, these equivalencies are not appropriate for all positions. These equivalencies are used for positions where specific degree and experience combinations are not required.
- Competencies are used in City hiring already, and these competencies are listed on the job postings. The required knowledge, skills and abilities are listed on the job posting, and may include education, certifications, years of experience, and competencies (often soft skills such as strategic leadership, collaboration, etc.).

**7. As an example, the British Government has a competency-based recruiting system that is open to members of the Commonwealth. Has The City evaluated the recruitment structure of other civil service organizations in order to attract the best possible talent?**

- The City uses a structured behavioural interviewing process which has been validated as being one of the best tools for recruiting diverse individuals. This process does use competencies, along with rating scales and consensus process to come to the final decision.
- In 2015, as part of the Leadership Strategic Plan for recruitment, a variety of public sector and private sector recruitment practices were reviewed. Best

practices were collected. There were at least two British organizations included in this review, although they were not British municipalities.

- In 2018, there was a review of best practice recruitment for agencies across Canada, including some civil service organizations. This review focused on positive diversity and inclusion practices. Other than this there hasn't been a recent formal evaluation of the recruiting practices of other civil service organizations.

**8. How does the screening and hiring process account for positions that may request knowledge and experience in City-specific software programs where that training/experience may not be readily available outside of The City of Calgary?**

- Most positions which require City-specific software knowledge and experience are opened to internal City staff only.
- Other positions may list experience and knowledge of the software as an 'asset', which means that this expertise is not required.