Public Service Commission of Canada

Commission de la fonction publique du Canada

Verification of Educational Credentials

A study by the Public Service Commission of Canada

October 2010

Canada

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Highlights

Job applicants' provision of accurate information regarding their professional qualifications is fundamental to our merit-based system. The purpose of this study was to describe public service practices and policies with respect to the verification of educational credentials reported by applicants in external appointment processes. The study also identified areas for improvement and best practices.

Due to the inherent risk in appointing a new hire to the public service, the study focussed on external appointments only. The study was narrowed by purposively selecting a sample of high-risk occupational groups. These occupational groups included Nursing, Law, Engineering and Land Survey, Financial Management, Biological Sciences and Defence Scientific Service. It was expected that organizations that employed professionals in these high-risk occupational groups would be the most likely to have verification practices in place.

Data for the study were obtained from three sources: interviews with key informants, a review of government-wide and organizational documents related to verification of education and the review of staffing files for external processes.

The study found that there are no government-wide policies or guidelines that state that education must be verified within the context of a staffing process. Key legislation such as the *Public Service Employment Act* and the Selection and Appointment Policy state that candidates must meet all essential qualifications to be appointed; however, these documents do not directly address the verification of education process.

Key informant interviews conducted with heads of human resources (HR), security officials, HR advisors and hiring managers across four public service organizations indicated that these organizations had no internal policy stipulating that candidates' educational credentials must be verified.

Despite the absence of a formal policy, all four organizations had verification practices in place. Thus, 85% of all staffing files reviewed included at least one document indicating a more stringent verification procedure (such as a copy of the degree and/or transcript, a foreign equivalence statement or proof of professional certification), whereas 11% of the files included a curriculum vitae only. Fewer than 4% of the files reviewed had no documentation indicating credentials were verified.

Key informant interviews revealed that the risks of misrepresentation of education were considered to be minimal, given that practices were in place to detect it. The bigger challenge cited was in detecting the misrepresentation of work experience.

Best practices involved staffing tools to ensure that educational credentials were verified, such as the use of a staffing checklist with a section that refers to proof of education, as well as requesting to see official confirmation of credentials.

The PSC is currently clarifying guidance to indicate that educational credentials must be verified, particularly upon entry to the public service, when changing to an occupational group with a different educational qualification, when the educational requirements for a position are increased or when an educational asset qualification is applied. This guidance will include a definition of what constitutes verification of education credentials.

Introduction

About the Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is an independent agency reporting to Parliament, mandated to safeguard the integrity of the federal public service staffing system and the political neutrality of the public service. The PSC develops policies and guidelines to ensure that appointments are made according to the principle of merit and that they respect the guiding values of fairness, access, transparency and representativeness.

The *Public Service Employment Act* encourages the PSC to delegate its appointment authorities to deputy heads and through them to their managers.[1] The intention is to give managers significant authority to hire, manage and lead their employees in order to meet the needs of Canadians. Instead of prescribing extensive rules and procedures, the PSC provides broad direction to guide managers in making staffing decisions.

As part of its oversight role, the PSC conducts audits, studies, evaluations and investigations to ensure the effectiveness of the staffing system and to make improvements where necessary. Studies are conducted to enhance our understanding of the staffing system, to draw our attention to potential staffing issues and to identify lessons learned and best practices. Studies are largely exploratory in nature, bringing together a range of methodologies to explore topics of interest.

The issue of study

Job applicants' provision of accurate background information in appointment processes is fundamental to our merit-based system. The appointment of unqualified employees may potentially harm the public in a number of ways, including adversely affecting the reputation of an organization or the government as a whole, impairing productivity and quality of work or threatening the security of individuals and data.

Preliminary research conducted for this study indicated that there are no government-wide staffing-related policies or directives that specifically require organizations to verify job applicants' educational information.[2] Further, there are no government-wide policies or directives that outline acceptable verification practices. There is a requirement, however, that all persons appointed meet the essential qualifications of the position, including education.[3]

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[1] *Public Service Employment Act*, 2003. Preamble.

[2] Since this study was conducted, the Public Service Commission has finalized tools on government-wide staffing file documentation that outline the documentation required in a staffing file, including evidence of academic credentials.

[3] *Public Service Employment Act*, 30 (2)

The Personnel Security Standard of the Government of Canada's *Policy on Government Security* requires that relevant education be checked as part of the assessment of reliability and that organizations are responsible for determining what constitutes sufficient verification of education.[4]

Study purpose and objectives

The purpose of the study was to describe public service practices and policies with respect to the verification of educational credentials reported by applicants in external appointment processes. The study also identified areas for improvement and best practices. The broader issue of misrepresentation was also explored in the study, including risks, challenges and successes in detecting misrepresentation in external processes.

The study had five objectives:

1. To describe education verification policy and practices that pertain at the government-wide level by virtue of staffing, security or other public service-wide policy or directive.

2. To describe education verification policy and practices that pertain at the organizational level, including any measures targeted at particular occupational groups or communities of interest.

3. To describe organizations' perceived challenges and successes in detecting candidates' misrepresentation of education or other background information.

4. To determine how organizations document their verification of educational credentials.

5. To obtain lessons learned and identify areas for improvement and best practices in verification strategies.

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[4] Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Personnel Security Standard, 2002.

Study methodology

Approach

Due to the inherent risk in appointing a new hire to the public service, the study focused on external appointments only.[5] The study was further narrowed by purposively selecting a sample of high-risk occupational groups. The rationale for selecting high-risk occupational groups is twofold. First, the appointment of an unqualified candidate in a high-risk occupational group might result in considerable harm to individuals, property or organizations.[6] Second, it was expected that organizations that employed professionals in certain high-risk occupational groups would be the most likely to have verification practices in place.[7]

Four government organizations were selected for study, based on their having large contingents of professionals in six occupational groups that were deemed to meet the definition of high-risk. The sample is given in **Table 1**:

Table 1: Study sample: Selected high-risk occupations by organization

Organization	Occupational group
Correctional Service Canada (CSC)	Nursing (NU)
Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)	Biological Sciences (BI)
National Defence – public service employees (DND)	Defence Scientific Service (DS)
National Defence – public service employees (DND)	Engineering and Land Survey (EN)
National Defence – public service employees (DND)	Financial Management (FI)
Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC)	Law (LA)

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[5]   Internal candidates were considered to be less of a risk for misrepresentation given information readily available to hiring managers such as performance evaluations, security checks, or second language evaluation results.

[6]   Miedema, A. and Hall, C. (2006). HR manager's guide to background checks and pre-employment testing. Toronto: Thomson/Creswell.; Walley, L., and Smith, M. (1998). Deception in selection. Chichester, UK: Wiley.

[7]   Final selection of occupational groups was made by retaining only groups for which professional certification or a recognized academic credential was required in accordance with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Occupational Group Qualification Standards. Other occupational groups such as PM, AS and CR groups have alternatives to education such as a combination of training and/or experience.

Lines of evidence

Data for the study were obtained from three sources: interviews with key informants, a review of government-wide and organizational documents related to verification of education and the review of staffing files for external processes.

Key informant interviews

We conducted interviews with 32 individuals, who, by virtue of their positions, were familiar with the verification of educational credentials issue. Informants were selected to include individuals with specific knowledge or experience in external processes involving each of the six target occupational groups. Interviews were conducted with:

- Heads of human resources (HR);

- Security officials;

- HR advisors who had recently been involved in external hiring processes for the target occupational group; and

- Hiring managers who had recently been involved in external hiring processes for the target occupational group.

Document review

Interview data were complemented by a review of organizational documents that addressed the topic of verification of educational credentials. These included issues papers, policies, plans, studies, guides, toolkits, procedures and other relevant material.

A document review was also carried out to determine what policy, guidelines or directives existed at the government-wide level related to the verification of educational credentials.

File review

We reviewed 162 staffing files documenting recent external appointments across the six occupational groups. The files were examined for documentation pertaining to the verification of educational credentials. The review focused on appointments from outside the public service made within fiscal year 2007-2008 and within the first six months of 2008-2009 (April 1, 2007, to September 30, 2008).

For more information regarding the study methodology and approach, see **Appendix 1**.

Study context

What do we mean by verification of educational credentials?

For the purpose of the study, "verification" is defined as any practice used by organizations to determine whether a candidate possesses the educational or professional qualifications stated in the Statement of Merit Criteria.

A verification practice may take place at any stage in the assessment process, from the initial application through to the interview and reference check. Organizations could apply a variety of verification practices, ranging from reviewing the curriculum vitae (CV) for the credential, to requesting a copy of the degree or transcript, to directly contacting the educational institution for confirmation.

What do we mean by misrepresentation?

Verification procedures exist in order to ensure that candidates meet the merit criteria. Candidates may make errors in the application process, or they may deliberately misrepresent their qualifications. Misrepresentation is defined as "an assertion not in accordance with the facts that is made with the intent to mislead or deceive."[8] Misrepresentation occurs when a candidate asserts a fact that is untrue, or when candidates use deliberate ambiguity or omission to mask undesirable features of their background or work history.[9] Misrepresentation may lead to fraud, which is defined as "a knowing misrepresentation of the truth or concealment to induce another to act in his or her detriment".[10] Under section 69 of the *Public Service Employment Act*[11], if the Commission has reason to believe that fraud may have occurred in an appointment process, it may investigate the appointment process.

Misrepresentation can take many forms in a selection process. The CV, the interview and the reference check comprise the "classic trio"[12] of assessment tools and each may provide opportunities for misrepresentation. With regard to educational credentials, candidates may misrepresent their educational attainment or other credentials in order to meet the essential qualifications for a position.

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[8] 2008 Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.

[9] Walley and Smith op cit.

[10] 2004 *Black's Law Dictionary*.

[11] *Public Service Employment Act*, 69; Investigations and Complaints relating to Appointments

[12] Meidema and Hall op cit; Walley and Smith op cit.

Study findings

Government-wide policy for verifying education

A variety of government-wide documents were analyzed including, but not limited to, the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA), the Public Service Appointment Framework, the Appointment Delegation and Accountability Instrument, qualification standards, security standards, various public service employment regulations and staffing toolkits.

There are no government-wide policies or guidelines that state that education must be verified

With the exception of the foreign credential evaluation process, there are no formal government-wide policies, guidelines or directives that explicitly state that education must be verified within the context of a staffing process. Key legislation such as the PSEA and Selection and Appointment Policy state that candidates must meet all the essential qualifications to be appointed;[13] however, these documents do not directly address the issue of verification of educational credentials. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) Personnel Security Standard states that relevant education and professional qualifications must be verified as part of the security assessment for reliability screening; however, departments are responsible for determining what constitutes sufficient verification of educational qualifications.[14]

Organization-level policy for verifying education

Interviewees were asked whether their organizations had any formal policies in place related to the verification of education and whether there were any specific policies related to the six high-risk occupational groups. We also reviewed organizational documentation provided by the interviewees.

Organizations did not have formal policies in place specifying that education must be verified

Interviewees noted that there were no formal policies in their organizations specifying that education must be verified or how it should be verified. Some interviewees stated, however, that there was an unwritten policy or shared understanding that education was a key component of merit and therefore should be checked. Others stated that they took direction from available guidelines or tools from central sources, such as the educational information requested through the Public Service Recruitment System administered by the Public Service Commission (PSC) or the Personnel Screening, Consent and Authorization Form, which requires organizations to verify educational information as part of the security screening check outlined in the Personnel Security Standard.

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[13] *Public Service Employment Act*, 30 (2); Selection and Appointment Policy.

[14] Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Personnel Security Standard, 2002.

A review of organizational documentation provided by interviewees also suggested that there were no formal policies or directives requiring the systematic verification of educational credentials.

Verification practices

In conjunction with the key informant interviews, we conducted a review of staffing files across the six occupational groups identified. The purpose of the file review was to observe whether and how the verification of education was documented.

In the absence of formal policy, all organizations had verification practices in place

To better understand the range of verification practices observed on file, we developed three categories of documentation:

1. Files with no documentation indicating that credentials were verified;

2. Files including only a curriculum vitae showing the candidate's credentials; and

3. Files with documentation indicating a more stringent verification practice (such as a copy of the degree and/or transcript, a foreign equivalence statement, or proof of professional certification).

Figure 1 illustrates that 85% of all files reviewed included at least one document indicating a more stringent verification procedure, whereas 11% of the files included a CV only. Fewer than 4% of the files reviewed, primarily Biological Sciences (BI) and Defence Scientific Service (DS) files had no documentation on file indicating that credentials were verified.

Figure 1 – Verification practices: Staffing files by type of documentation held on file

Files with no documentation indicating that educational credentials were verified

Files including a CV as the only documentation on file

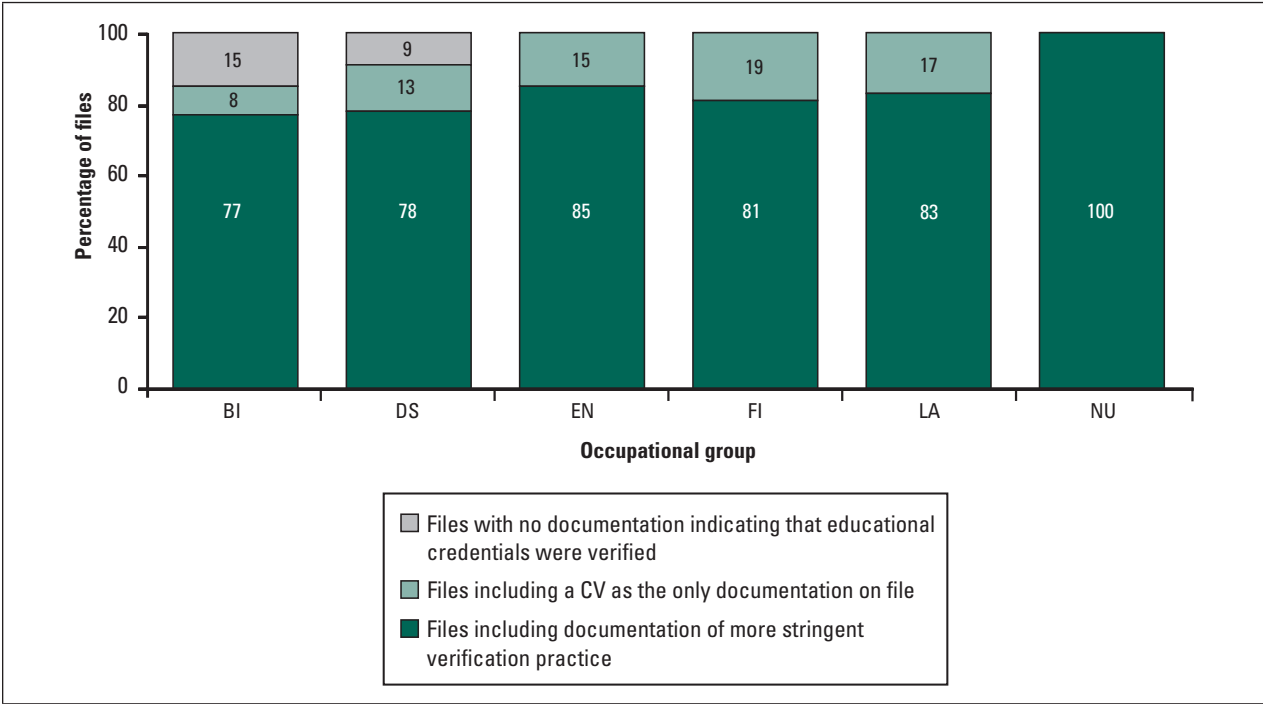Files including documentation of more stringent verification practice
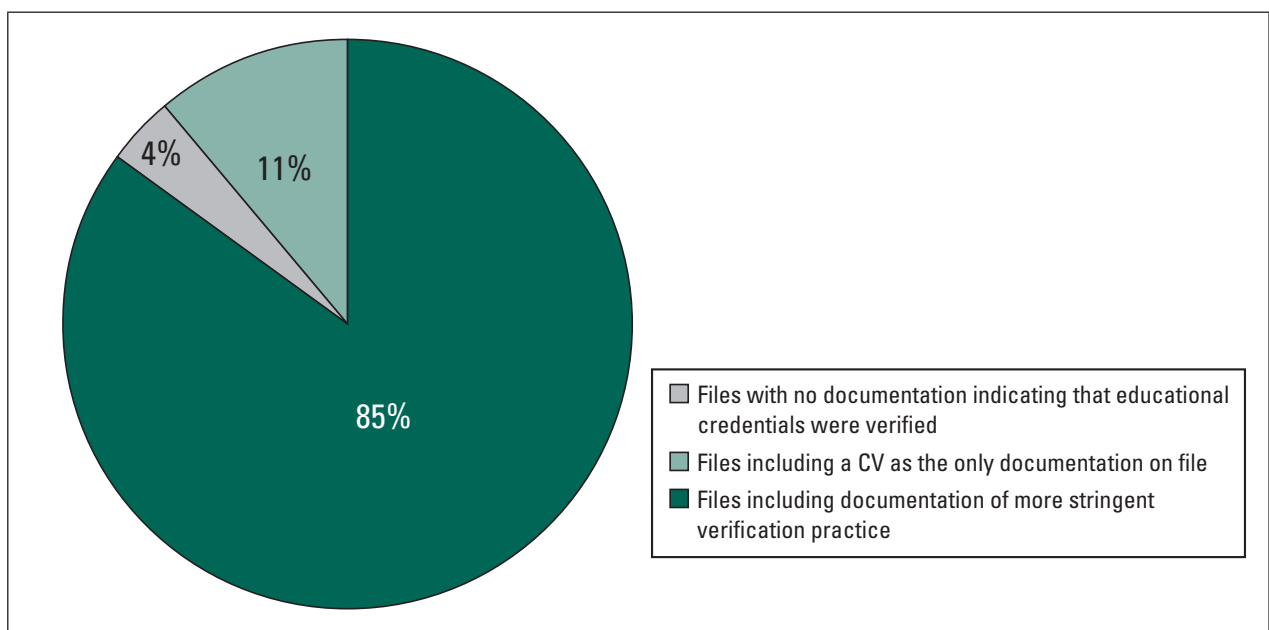
Source: Staffing files reviewed (n=162)

The prevalence of more stringent verification practices is consistent with the interview findings. When asked to describe their verification practices, interviewees tended to mention one of the more stringent procedures, such as requesting a copy of the degree or transcript. None of the interviewees mentioned checking the CV as a verification practice. Further, when interviewees were asked about the risks and challenges associated with misrepresentation, the majority claimed that misrepresentation was not an issue, given the more stringent practices they had in place to verify education.

Verification practices varied by occupational group

As shown in Figure 2, all of the Nursing (NU) files reviewed contained documentation indicating more stringent verification procedures compared to 77% of the BI files and 78% of the DS files. Files containing a CV only ranged from 8% for BI files to 19% for Financial Management (FI) files. Of all the files reviewed, 15% of the BI files and 9% of the DS files contained no documentation verifying education.

Figure 2: Verification practices: Staffing files by type of documentation and occupational group

Source: Staffing files reviewed (n=162)

Differences in verification practices between occupational groups reflected varied occupational standards

Figure 3 provides information for the subsample of files (n = 138) showing evidence of one of the more stringent verification practices. It demonstrates how the type of document on file varied with occupational group. Files with documentation from an educational institution only

(such as a degree), were common in the BI (100%), DS (100%), Engineering and Land Survey (EN) (83%), and FI (81%) groups. Files with documentation from a professional association only were common in the Law (LA) group (60%), as expected. Files containing documentation from both an educational institution and a professional association were common in the NU group (74%) and LA group (27%).

This pattern of findings was explained in the interviews. Interviewees indicated that their organizations requested verification of the credential specified in the occupational qualifications for the group. For occupational groups requiring professional certification (NU, LA, FI, EN), candidates were often asked to provide proof of their certification, or, in some instances, the licensing body was contacted directly for a list of its members to verify status. Interviewees indicated that, for these occupational groups, verification of education was not necessary, since the professional association verified the education as part of the certification process.

For occupational groups where qualifications specified an educational requirement, the most common practice was to request that candidates provide proof of their degree. Interviewees noted that, where the Statement of Merit Criteria further specified an area of specialization, a transcript was requested to ensure that candidates had the appropriate coursework. Some interviewees indicated that they accepted letters from the educational institutions as verification in instances where the candidate could not produce the degree or transcript.

Figure 3: Verification practices: Staffing files showing the more stringent verification practices by type of document and occupational group
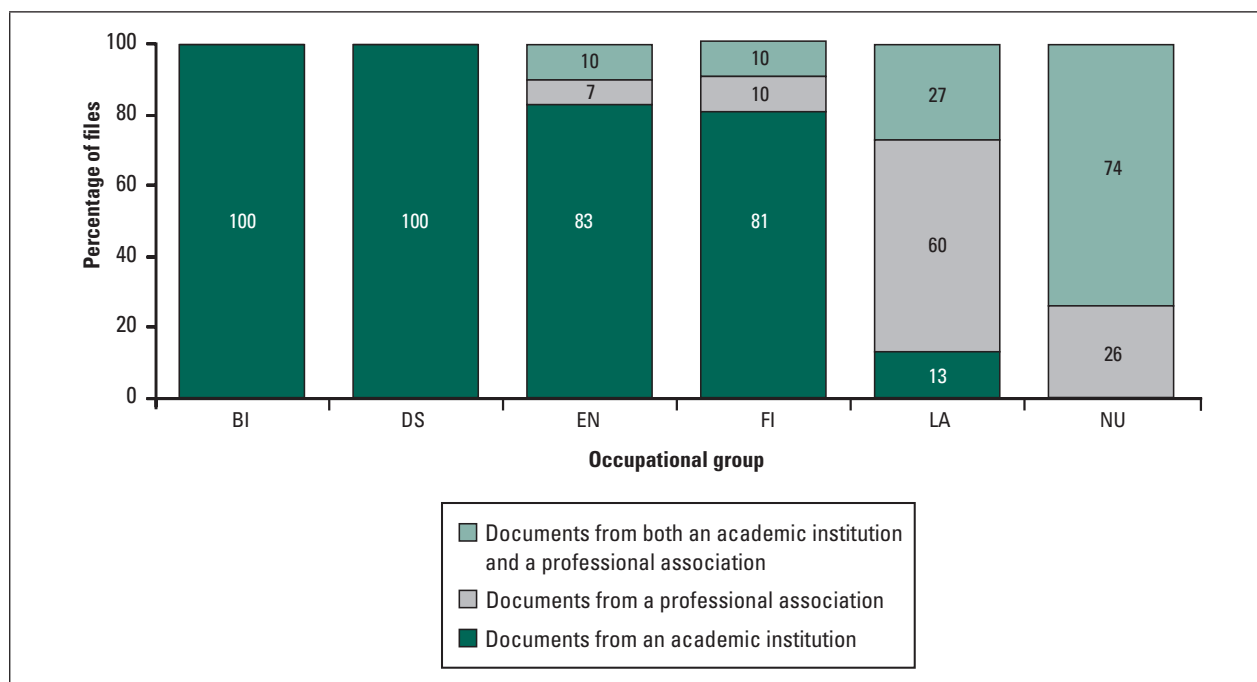
Source: Staffing files reviewed showing stringent verification practice (n=138)
Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

It is worth noting that in a small proportion of files showing a more stringent procedure as defined above, we observed even more rigorous verification procedures including the following:

1. An attested copy of the diploma or transcript, or an original transcript;

2. An original or attested copy of certification or eligibility for certification;

3. An original or attested copy of the statement of foreign credential equivalence; or

4. Documentation showing verification of education, certification, or eligibility for certification directly with the academic institution or professional association.

These more rigorous procedures were observed most often among the LA, DS, and NU groups. Over half (53%) of LA files contained transcripts, attested copies of degrees or evidence that education was verified directly with an institution or professional association, as did 44% of DS files, and 29% of NU files (data not shown).

Challenges and risks in detecting misrepresentation

Risks of misrepresentation were considered to be minimal given that practices were in place to detect it

Only half of interviewees had ever suspected a candidate of misrepresenting education or certification, such as claiming to have credentials not earned. When asked about the risks associated with the misrepresentation of education, interviewees cited a number of potential risks, including technical incompetence on the job, harm to individuals or the public, financial harm and damage to the reputation of the organization or government as a whole. These statements were often tempered with the reminder that, in spite of potential risks, educational misrepresentation did not pose a major threat because their organizations had assessment mechanisms in place for detecting it.

As part of this study, we explored one form of misrepresentation of educational credentials related to the use of "unaccredited" institutions to obtain degrees/diplomas. Of the files that contained information on educational institutions attended (n=152), all appointees appeared to have obtained their credentials from accredited institutions.

The bigger challenge cited was in detecting the misrepresentation of work experience

Interviewees were asked whether they had ever suspected misrepresentation of other background information. Although only half of interviewees had been able to recall an instance in which they suspected misrepresentation of education, two-thirds recalled an instance of suspected misrepresentation of other background information.

The type of information most frequently suspected of misrepresentation was the candidate's work experience. Interviewees across all four organizations indicated that it was a challenge to detect misrepresentation of the duties performed on previous jobs and the level of responsibility held. In instances where work experience was in question, interviewees indicated that they used other assessment tools, such as reference checks, to verify candidates' credentials.

Best practices in verification

Best practices involved staffing tools to ensure that education credentials were verified and official confirmation with the institution or professional association

Interview findings indicated that misrepresentation of education was not perceived to pose a risk to organizations, given that verification procedures were built into the staffing system to detect it. File review findings corroborated that verification procedures were in place, in that the great majority of files contained documentation of the procedures that had been implemented.

Some organizations employed what could be considered best practices in verifying educational credentials. These practices include the following:

- Requesting to see the original copy of the degree, transcript or professional certification and keeping documentation on file that the original was witnessed;

- Contacting the academic institution to verify educational credentials;

- Requesting a letter directly from the institution to the hiring organization, stating educational qualifications;

- Contacting the professional association to check the candidate's professional certification;

- On-line verification of a candidate's certification status through the Web sites of professional bodies prior to appointment; and

- Using a staffing checklist with a section that refers to proof of education, which attests that human resources personnel witnessed the original document.

Concluding remarks

The study provides information on the practices and policies in place with respect to the verification of educational credentials in external appointment processes. Findings indicate that there is no government-wide staffing-related policy or directive that requires organizations to verify job applicants' educational information.

With respect to the verification policies and practices in place for the four public service organizations and six high-risk occupational groups sampled, findings indicate that these organizations have no internal policy stipulating that candidates' education credentials must be verified. In spite of the absence of policy, however, all organizations had verification practices in place. Practices varied across occupations and reflected the educational or professional requirements of the position.

For a small proportion of the files reviewed there was no evidence that credentials had been verified. We cannot conclude on the basis of a file review that verification of education credentials did not take place; we can state only that evidence of verification was not on file. This finding may be attributable to an omission or error in documentation.

The study identified several verification procedures that may be considered best practices. These included requesting the original degree or professional certification, attesting that the original was witnessed or verifying credentials directly with the institutions or professional associations.

The PSC is currently clarifying guidance to indicate that educational credentials must be verified, particularly upon entry to the public service, when changing to an occupational group with a different educational qualification, when the educational requirements for a position are increased or when an educational asset qualification is applied. This guidance will include a definition of what constitutes verification of education credentials.

Study team

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Methodology

Methodology for identifying organizations and high-risk occupational groups

A purposive sampling approach was used to identify a segment of professionalized occupational groups for which the appointment of an unqualified candidate might result in harm to individuals, property or organizations. These occupations included those serving vulnerable client populations (children, the elderly and the infirm and guardians of public safety/providers of emergency services), those with financial responsibility and those in highly professionalized industries (architecture, engineering, law, medicine).[15]

The approach involved the following four steps:

1. Identification of high-risk occupations
An initial list of high-risk occupations was developed by identifying occupational groups in the areas of health, law, science, engineering and emergency services. Following this first selection process, a second wave of selection was applied to obtain only occupational groups for which specialized training or a recognized university degree was required in accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat Qualification Standards.

This second selection phase generated the following list of 13 occupational groups: Architecture and Town Planning (AR), Biological Sciences (BI), Chemistry (CH), Dentistry (DE), Defence Scientific Service (DS), Engineering and Land Survey (EN), Financial Administration (FI), Law (LA), Medicine (MD), Nursing (NU), Pharmacy (PH), Psychology (PS) and Veterinary Medicine (VM).

2. Determination of the number of hires in the target occupations by organization
The number of external appointments in the 13 target occupational categories was obtained from Public Service Commission administrative records. This number was computed separately for each of the departments and agencies under the *Public Service Employment Act*. The period was restricted to appointments taking place between April 1, 2007, and September 30, 2008.[16] Appointments of individuals who were students or casuals prior to the appointment were not included.

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[15] Miedema and Hall op cit; Walley and Smith op cit.

[16] The Public Service Commission-Statistical Information Site (SIS) was queried on December 16, 2008. Results of this query may vary over time as the database is updated or modified on a monthly basis.

3. Selection of organizations for study

The list of organizations was examined to identify those with the greatest number of external appointments in the target occupational groups. This procedure identified the following four organizations:

- Correctional Service Canada
- National Defence (public service employees)
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Public Prosecution Service of Canada

4. Selection of six high-risk occupations within the four organizations

Examination of the pattern of appointments in each organization showed that the majority of appointments were concentrated in a small number of occupational groups such as nurses in Correctional Service Canada and biologists in Fisheries and Oceans Canada. To streamline the analysis, six occupational groups representing the bulk of external staffing activities within each organization were targeted for study.

The procedures yielded the sample shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Study population and sample size: Selected high-risk occupations by organization[17]

Occupational group	Organization	Population size	Sample size
Nursing (NU)	Correctional Service Canada	179	35
Biological Sciences (BI)	Fisheries and Oceans Canada	64	26
Scientific Services (DS)	National Defence (public service employees)	50	23
Engineering and Land Survey (EN)	National Defence (public service employees)	163	34
Financial Management (FI)	National Defence (public service employees)	62	26
Law (LA)	Public Prosecution Service of Canada	30	18
Total		**548**	**162**

Source: Job Applicant Information System (JAIS)

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[17] The Audit and Studies Division determined the minimal number of appointment files to be sampled within each of the six selected occupational groups. The goal of sampling was to have a sufficiently large sample for each of the six occupational groups to provide population estimates. Minimal sample size was estimated based on a confidence level of 90%, a confidence interval of 10% and an expected deviation rate (percentage of non-compliant files) of 20% for each of the six groups. The sample sizes based on this standard for the six occupational groups are reported in Table 2, yielding a total of 162 sampling units from a population of 548 external appointments (30%).

Appendix 2 – Statistical background

Table 3: Verification practices: Staffing files by type of document indicating verification practice and occupational group

Type of document	BI (DFO)	DS (DND)	EN (DND)	FI (DND)	LA (PPSC)	NU (CSC)	Total %[18]
Curriculum vitae / Résumé specifying credentials	69	87	97	100	83	71	85
Documents addressing educational qualifications							
Copy of degree / diploma	73	30	71	62	28	69	59
Transcript	12	70	15	23	6	9	21
Statement of foreign credential equivalence / evaluation	–	9	12	4	–	–	4
Education verified directly with institution	–	13	–	8	–	3	4
Documents addressing professional qualifications							
Professional certification	–	–	6	–	72	100	31
Statement of eligibility for certification	–	–	3	15	–	–	3
Certification or eligibility for certification verified directly with association	–	–	–	–	44	–	5

Source: Staffing files reviewed (n=162)

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[18] Totals do not equal 100 as multiple documents were found in some files.

Appendix 3 – Glossary

Appointment
An action taken under the *Public Service Employment Act* to hire or promote someone.

Assessment methods
Methods such as interviews, written tests, reference checks and simulations designed to assess candidates against the qualifications for a position.

Essential qualifications
Those qualifications necessary for the work to be performed and that must be met in order for a person to be appointed. These include education, experience, occupational certification, knowledge, abilities and skills, aptitudes, personal suitability and official language proficiency.

Employer
The Treasury Board of Canada is the employer. However, in the case of a separate agency, the agency itself is the employer.

External appointment process
A process in which persons may be considered, whether or not they are employed in the public service.

Foreign credentials
Education diplomas/degrees or professional certification/accreditation issued outside of Canada.

Foreign credential evaluation
The process that compares international educational credentials to those obtained in one of Canada's education systems.

High-risk occupations
Occupations where the appointment of an unqualified candidate might result in considerable harm to individuals, property or organizations.[19]

Merit
One of the core values of the *Public Service Employment Act*. An appointment is made on the basis of merit when a person appointed meets the essential qualifications for work to be performed, as established by the deputy head, including official language proficiency. The sub-delegated manager may also take into account any current or future asset qualifications, operational requirements and organizational needs.

Occupational group
A grouping used for classification, comprising similar kinds of work requiring similar skills.

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[19] Miedema and Hall op cit; Walley and Smith op cit.

Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS)
An electronic tool that screens applicants in minutes, based on responses to a customized on-line application form that includes an on-line questionnaire.

Qualification standards
Standards established in relation to education, knowledge, experience, occupational certification and language that the employer considers necessary for the nature of the work to be performed and to meet the current and future needs of the public service.

Recruitment
Hiring from outside the public service.

Staffing file
Documentation used to support, confirm or explain the staffing practices and the reasons for the appointment decisions that are made throughout a staffing process.

Statement of Merit Criteria (SoMC)
Forms the basis for the assessment of merit; includes essential qualifications, asset qualifications, operational requirements and organizational needs.