

B-58



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Susan Davis,
et al., Secretarial Assistant 3
Non-Stenographic (S0561S)

CSC Docket Nos. 2015-1683
2015-1790
2015-1726
2015-1682

Examination Appeals

Corrected

ISSUED: APR 15 2015

(RE)

Susan Davis, AmberLynne DePasquale, Linda DeWitt, and Lauren Mohlin appeal the determinations of the Division of Selection Services (DSS)¹ which found that they did not meet the experience requirements for the open competitive examination for Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic (S0561S). These appeals have been consolidated due to common issues.

The subject examination announcement was issued with a closing date of July 16, 2014 and was open to residents of New Jersey who met the announced requirements. These requirements included three years of experience in secretarial and administrative clerical work. Successful completion of a clerical training program with a minimum of 700 classroom training hours or 30 semester hour credits in secretarial science from an accredited college or university could be substituted for one year of the required experience. Course work must have included typing skills, methods and procedures; other courses could include but not be limited to, office procedures, word processing and business English. The appellants were found to be ineligible based on a lack of experience. The examination was given to 52 candidates on February 19, 2015, and the results are not yet available.

Ms. Davis listed two positions on her application: Department Secretary and Assistant Registrar. She did not submit a resume with her application. As the appellant's 2 years, 8 months as a Department Secretary was acceptable, she was

¹ The eligibility unit is currently within the Division of Agency Services (DAS).

found to be lacking 4 months of applicable experience. On appeal, Ms. Davis submits a resume with 10 additional positions, six of which do not have duties. She argues that her experience as an Accounts Specialist, an Assistant Billing Director, and a Business Manufacturer exceeds the minimum experience requirement.

Ms. DePasquale listed one position on her application, a provisional Secretarial Assistant 3 Non-Stenographic. She did not submit a resume with her application. She was credited with 9 months of applicable experience, and was found to be lacking 2 years, 3 months of qualifying experience. On appeal, Ms. DePasquale states that she believed that she only needed to submit current employment information, and she submits a resume with seven additional positions. She argues that she has extensive prior employment and experience in administrative and managerial fields.

Ms. DeWitt listed two positions on her application, Senior Clerk Typist and Volunteer Coordinator. She did not submit a resume with her application. Neither of these positions was accepted, and she was found to be lacking three years of qualifying experience. On appeal, Ms. DeWitt submits her resume listing four additional positions, and she argues that she is competent in secretarial and administrative clerical work. She provides a description of some of her duties and skills, as well as a list of references.

Ms. Mohlin listed one position on her application, Principal Clerk Typist. She also provided a resume with five other positions, Senior Clerk Typist, Clerk Typist, Receptionist/Customer Service for Sysco Food Services of Las Vegas, Sales Representative and Administrator of Fleer Trading Cards/Fleer Collectibles, and Quality Administrative Assistant with PHC Industries, Inc. As none of this experience was accepted, she was found to be lacking 3 years of qualifying experience. On appeal, Ms. Mohlin argues that she has 7.5 years of experience as a Principal Clerk Typist, and 2 years as a Senior Clerk Typist, and she lists duties for each position.

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.3(b) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the open competitive examination announcement by the closing date.

CONCLUSION

At the outset, it is noted that providing the information requested on the application is not a mere formality, but is part of the examination process. The Commission receives hundreds of thousands of applications a year and test eligibility must be determined from the application in order to meet administrative responsibilities and to establish uniform and fair requirements for all candidates. See *In the Matter of Pamela B. Ward* (CSC, decided June 7, 1984). Under *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.1(g), the Commission can and does accept clarifying information in eligibility

appeals. However, *N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.1(f)* provides that an application may only be amended prior to the announced closing date. For example, information submitted on appeal pertaining to duties in a given title that expands or enlarges information previously submitted is considered clarifying and is accepted; however, information about a position not listed on the application is not accepted.

Mss. Davis, DePasquale, and DeWitt failed to list all relevant positions of employment with their applications, and submitted them on appeal for review. The Announcement and On-Line Application System User Guide, which is located on the Civil Service Commission's website, includes directions on filing applications. Page *i* of this guide states "Carefully review your application to ensure that it is complete and accurate before submitting," and "You must complete your application in detail. Your score may be based on a comparison of your background with the job requirements. Failure to complete your application properly may cause you to be declared ineligible or may lower your score if your application is your test paper." Page 4 has a sample open-competitive announcement. On this sample, and on the actual announcement for the examination, direction 3 states, "You must complete your application in detail." Page 18 of the guide directs applicants to "Provide all employment information (not just your current employment information). If you have multiple experiences, make sure that you provide each one separately." The instructions on the application where applicants list experience states, "**Employment Record:** You may be declared ineligible or you may not receive proper credit for scoring purposes if you do not properly complete your application. If you held different positions with the same employer, list each position separately. ... Since your application may be your only test paper, be sure it is complete and accurate. Failure to complete your application properly may cause you to be declared ineligible, lower your score, or possibly cause you to fail." Additional information was given on the pages that followed on how to submit supporting documentation, such as resumes. Page 23 asked candidates to check each section of the application to make sure that all information was complete and accurate. It also indicated that once the application was submitted, the candidate would not be able to go back to add or modify information.

After completing the application, applicants were required to check "yes" or "no" certifying that the information provided in the application is complete and accurate, and that they understood that once their electronic application was submitted, they could not make changes, but must mail changes or additional information by the closing date. If an applicant selected "no," he or she was returned to the main menu and the application was not processed. As such, each applicant certified that their application was complete and accurate when they filed. The appellants had been given ample information and directions regarding completing their applications including providing all employment positions. As this examination is extremely competitive, with 52 candidates taking the examination,

there is no basis to accept additional information after the closing date in the instant matter.

Next, possession of knowledge, skills and abilities are not the same as experience. Candidates may be trained in secretarial work, but they must still meet the announced requirements for an examination, and these requirements usually include experience, education, or licenses. The knowledge, skills and abilities possessed by candidates are tested in the examination and working test period processes.

Clerical work is the support of operations in a technical, administrative or managerial office. General clerical work consists of a variety of office functions, such as receiving and sorting mail, filing, preparing and sending (not composing) correspondence, making copies, searching files and other information sources, checking forms and other documents for completeness and accuracy. General clerical work does not require substantive knowledge of a specialized field. It is more likely to be performed in a manual environment, in environments where the work does not involve multiple processing steps or, in those where the completion of assignments does not involve the application of regulations and guidelines. General clerical work does not involve complex thought or decision-making.

Administrative clerical work extends beyond basic tasks such as opening and sorting mail, recording messages, and routine manual or electronic document preparation. Administrative clerical work requires greater knowledge of a specialized content area. It involves the application of procedures and/or multiple processing steps to complete an assignment or transaction. Incumbents may be responsible for gathering requested data and using automated systems to update, store and retrieve or locate information, and can make determinations on the completeness and accuracy of documents, forms and other information. Administrative clerical work likely involves a variety of related tasks to complete an assignment or transaction. It implies complete responsibility for the specific content area. Some examples include: processing tax liens, delegated executive correspondence, reviewing and processing applications for licenses, permits and other documents, and updating account information.

Ms. Davis' experience in the title Assistant Registrar, Ms. DeWitt's experience in the titles Senior Clerk Typist and Volunteer Coordinator, and Ms. Mohlin's experience as a Senior Clerk Typist, Clerk Typist, and Receptionist/Customer Service are all clerical in nature, but do not rise to the level of administrative clerical. As such, these positions are not qualifying. Ms. Mohlin's positions as a Sales Representative and Administrator of Fleeer Trading Cards/Fleeer Collectibles, and Quality Administrative Assistant with PHC Industries, Inc., are clearly inapplicable.

Ms. Mohlin's title, Principal Clerk Typist, is administrative clerical in nature. However, an experience requirement that lists a number of duties which define the primary experience, requires that the applicants demonstrate that they primarily performed all of those duties for the required length of time. Performance of only one or some of the duties listed is not indicative of comprehensive experience. See *In the Matter of Jeffrey Davis* (MSB, decided March 14, 2007). Additionally, in order for experience to be considered applicable, it must have as its primary focus full-time responsibilities in the areas required in the announcement. See *In the Matter of Bashkim Vlashi* (MSB, decided June 9, 2004). There is only one primary focus to any position. Also, applicants must demonstrate on their applications that the duties they perform provide them with the experience required for eligibility. See *In the Matter of Charles Klingberg* (Merit System Board, decided August 28, 2001).

In this case, candidates were required to have three years of secretarial *and* administrative clerical work. Ms. Mohlin's duties in this title are primarily administrative clerical in nature and did not include secretarial duties. She indicated on her application that she maintained databases, logs, statistics and banking records, paid invoices and printed office checks, processed mail, made copies, kept files, typed letters, prepared packets, created forms, databases and reports, took calls and assisted walk-in customers, and acted as backup for other positions. Secretarial duties include duties performed for the executive, such as scheduling appointments, giving information to callers, reading and routing incoming mail, locating files, typing, filing, greeting visitors, arranging travel schedules and preparing outgoing mail. The appellant did not perform work as a secretary to an executive in her position as a Principal Clerk Typist. In sum, Ms. Mohlin did not demonstrate that her current and former duties provide her with the experience required for eligibility.

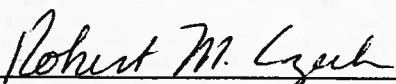
A thorough review of all material presented indicates that the decisions of the Division of Selection Services, that the appellants did not meet the announced requirements for eligibility by the examination closing date, are amply supported by the record and the appellants provide no basis to disturb those decisions. Thus, the appellants have failed to support their burden of proof in these matters.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that these appeals be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 1st DAY OF APRIL, 2015



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