

B-112



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION  
OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Girma Demeke and  
Renee Laterza, Technical Assistant  
Higher Education (S0288S),  
Statewide

Examination Appeals

CSC Docket Nos. 2015-974 and 2015-  
1034

ISSUED: **FEB 09 2015** (SLK)

Girma Demeke and Renee Laterza appeal the determinations of the Division of Selection Services<sup>1</sup> (Selection Services) that they did not meet the experience requirements for the open competitive examination for Technical Assistant Higher Education (S0288S), Statewide. These appeals have been consolidated due to common issues presented.

The examination at issue was announced with specific requirements that had to be met as of the May 20, 2014 closing date (see attached). A total of 63 individuals applied for the subject examination and 13 were deemed eligible. Certification OS150025 has been issued and it contains the names of two eligibles. Its disposition is due on April 13, 2015. The eligible list expires on October 1, 2017.

Mr. Demeke indicated on his application that he was an Editor for the Africa World Press from September 2013 to May 2014, a Research Fellow for the Institute of Semitic Studies from June 2011 to May 2013, a Director for Addis Ababa University from May 2005 to January 2008, an Assistant Professor for Addis Ababa University from October 2004 to 2007, a Visiting Scholar for the University of Mainz for the Fall 2003/4, a Lecturer for Kotebe College of Teacher Education from September 1996 to June 1998, and a High School Teacher for Dira Dawa from December 1993 to August 1996. Mr. Demeke also possesses a Doctorate degree. Selection Services credited him with meeting the education requirement and one year of experience based on his additional college credits, but determined that none

<sup>1</sup> Now known as the Division of Agency Services.

of his experience was applicable. Therefore, it determined that Mr. Demeke lacked two years of experience.

Ms. Laterza indicated on her application that she was an Agency Services Representative 1 for William Paterson University (William Paterson) from December 2012 to May 2014, a part-time Playground/Cafeteria Aide for James Fallon Elementary School from September 2008 to December 2012, and an Executive Coordinator for International Specialty Products (ISP) from August 1992 to January 1998. Ms. Laterza also possesses an Associate's degree. Selection Services credited her with meeting the education requirements and one year of experience based on her completed college credits, but determined that none of her experience was applicable. Therefore, it determined that Ms. Laterza lacked two years of experience.

On appeal, Mr. Demeke states that he has over ten years of experience in relation to evaluation, review and analysis of written materials. He indicates that he has taught both undergraduate and postgraduate programs in various universities and that he has supervised a number of postgraduate theses. Mr. Demeke presents that as a Director of a research center for nearly three years, he was involved in examining applications, proposals, reports from various stakeholders which included among others, public universities, research institutes, and government organizations. He states that as a General Editor of its journal and working papers, he was in charge of the evaluation and review of manuscripts. Mr. Demeke maintains that for the past three years he has been evaluating manuscripts and reviewing and writing proposals. Further, he represents that during his Co-Fellowship and as a Featured Scholar for different institutions for two years, besides performing research work, he wrote and examined proposals as well as served as Editor for its journal and monograph series. Mr. Demeke states that he currently works as a Reviewer and Editor at the Africa World Press and Red Sea Press and that he has also been involved in the evaluating course materials and syllabuses for the American Council on Education. Mr. Demeke asserts that his experience reviewing, analyzing, and evaluation of written materials in accordance to specific rules and guidelines makes him qualified for the subject examination.

Ms. Laterza presents that, starting in June 2014, she began provisionally serving in the subject title for William Paterson. She asserts that she was offered the position due to her experience analyzing, compiling, and accurately reviewing data within her office as well as her experience from prior jobs. Ms. Laterza lists her various responsibilities with William Paterson which mainly involve technical work using data and technology to process and analyze information as well as to ensure data management compliance with regulations and set data management priorities. She also indicates that as an employee for ISP for five years, she was responsible for analyzing data, compiling and reviewing reports for Senior Management, and supporting management to ensure that company policies were

being followed. Ms. Laterza also provides that she evaluated company policies and procedures to ensure that they were current and beneficial to the company. Further, she highlights her education and asserts that she has over 10 years of relevant experience. The appellant submits separate letters from the Director of Admissions, an Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions, and the Executive Director – Enrollment Management and Technology for William Paterson in support of her appeal, which describe how her current technical data management and related technical work that she performs for William Paterson, her prior technical data work for ISP, and her educational background qualifies her for the subject examination.

### CONCLUSION

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.3(b)2 requires applicants to possess all the requirements specified in an announcement for an open competitive examination by the closing date. Further, *N.J.A.C.* 4A:1-1.2(c) states that the Civil Service Commission (Commission) may relax a rule for good cause in order to effectuate the purposes of Title 11A, New Jersey Statutes.

Initially, Selection Services correctly determined that the appellants did not meet the requirements for the subject examination. However, in accordance with *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-2.1(g), the Commission can accept clarifying information in eligibility appeals. For example, information submitted on appeal pertaining to duties performed in a given position that expands or enlarges on information previously submitted is considered clarifying. With respect to Mr. Demeke, initially, he did not adequately explain his experience in his original application and resume. On appeal, Mr. Demeke clarifies that as an Editor, Research Fellow, Director, and Professor/Scholar, he reviewed, analyzed, and evaluated written materials, such as applications, proposals, reports, and manuscripts, in accordance with each organization's rules and policies. Therefore, the Commission is satisfied that Mr. Demeke's education and various experiences for over ten years satisfy the required experience and he should be admitted to the subject examination.

In regard to Ms. Laterza, her initial application and clarification on appeal do not indicate that she is primarily reviewing, analyzing, and evaluating *written material* which is processed according to specific statutes, rules, regulations, and/or policies in a public or private organization. However, it cannot be ignored that the definition of the job specification for the subject title indicates that an incumbent, under a Program Officer or other supervisory official at a State University, performs the more responsible detailed clerical duties related to statistical, fiscal, and analytical, and/or interpretive activities within broad limits including the making of recommendations; supervises staff and has responsibility for a technical program area; does other related duties as required. As such, an incumbent in the subject title can be primarily involved with statistical, fiscal or analytical activities

which are generally functions that require the review, analysis, and evaluation of *data*; however, the experience requirements only allow for experience in the review, analysis, and evaluation of written materials. Therefore, the job specification's experience requirements should be interpreted to include such things as statistical analysis. In Ms. Laterza's case, she clarified on appeal that she has performed a variety of technical data management and other technical duties related to statistical and analytical activities as well as setting data management priorities and ensuring data management compliance with organizational policy and government rules and regulations for both ISP and William Paterson. Consequently, the Commission finds that her education and her seven years of experience with ISP and William Paterson performing technical data management are acceptable to meet the requirements for the subject examination.

One additional matter warrants comment. Given the potential disconnect between the job requirements and duties of the position, Agency Services should review the job specification for the subject title and make any changes that it deems necessary.

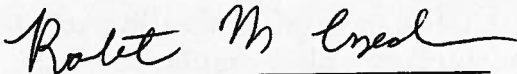
It is noted that these remedies are limited to the particular circumstances of these matters and do not set a precedent in any other matter.

#### ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that these appeals be granted and Girma Demeke's and Renee Laterza's applications be processed for prospective employment opportunities only.

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 4<sup>th</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2015



Robert M. Czech  
Chairperson  
Civil Service Commission

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and  
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Director  
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**Attachment**

**c: Girma Demeke  
Renee Laterza  
Denise Robinson Lewis  
Kelly Glenn  
Ken Connolly  
Joseph Gambino**



## Job Announcements

Symbol: S0288S Title: **TECHNICAL ASSISTANT HIGHER EDUCATION**

Issue Date: 04/29/2014

Closing Date: 05/20/2014

Jurisdiction: STATE

Salary: \$38,778.60 - \$54,460.47 Per Year

Num. of Positions: 2

Workweek: 35 Hours per week

Application Fee: \$25.00

### OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF:

New Jersey

### REQUIREMENTS:

**EDUCATION:** Completion of thirty (30) semester hours at an accredited college or university. Please upload a copy of your transcript with your application. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility.

**EXPERIENCE:** Three (3) years of experience in the review, analysis, and evaluation of written material which is processed according to specific statutes, rules, regulations, and/or policies in a public or private organization.

**NOTE:** An additional thirty (30) semester hour credits at an accredited college or university may be substituted for one (1) year of experience. If you are substituting education for so of the required experience, please upload a copy of your transcript with your application. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility.

**Foreign transcripts must be evaluated by a recognized evaluation service. Please upload a copy of your evaluation with your application. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility.**

**NOTE:** Applicants who do not possess the required education may substitute additional experience as indicated above on a year-for-year basis with thirty (30) semester hour credits being equal to one (1) year of experience.

**LICENSE:** Appointees will be required to possess a driver's license valid in New Jersey only if the operation of a vehicle rather than employee mobility, is necessary to perform the essential duties of the position.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

1. NJAC 4A:4-2.3(b) states that all requirements must be met as of the closing date.
2. Online applications must be completed and submitted by the closing date listed above.
3. **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 lower your score or cause you to fail.**
4. If an employment list results from this announcement, it may be certified to fill full-time and part-time positions.
5. If the announcement is open to residents of more than one jurisdiction, the eligible list will be ranked according to that residency sequence. Please click here for additional information.
6. Effective September 1, 2011, the New Jersey First residency law was enacted. Please click here for additional information.
7. In accordance with Public Law 2010 c. 26, Veterans pay a reduced application fee of \$15.00 if they have previously established Veteran's Preference with the DMAVA (as defined by NJSA 11A:5-1 et seq) or their claim is approved by DMAVA at least 8 days prior to the issuance of the eligibility list. Please note this reduced fee does not apply to Public Safety titles.

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