



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of Lisa Walker,
Quality Assurance Specialist, Health
Services (PS7299H), Department of
Health

CSC Docket No. 2019-838

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: October 31, 2018 (RE)

Lisa Walker appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) which found that, per the substitution clause for education, she did not meet the experience requirements for the promotional examination for Quality Assurance Specialist Health Services (PS7299H), Department of Health.

The subject examination announcement was issued with a closing date of April 23, 2018 and was open to employees in the non-competitive division who had an aggregate of one year of continuous permanent service as of the closing date in the title Charge Nurse OR to employees in the competitive division who had an aggregate of one year of continuous permanent service as of the closing date in any competitive title, and who possessed the required license and experience. Applicants were required to be licensed in New Jersey as Registered Professional Nurses. The required experience included four years as a registered nurse, one year of which is specialized experience including the monitoring and/or evaluation of clinical or human services records and programs in a mental health, geriatric, health care setting or human services agency. It was noted that graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree, and three years of specialized experience in the field of quality assurance in a mental health, geriatric, health care setting, or human services agency which includes monitoring and/or evaluation of clinical or human services records and programs, which may include allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or incidents of client abuse or safety and well-being, could be substituted for the above license and experience requirements. The appellant was found to be below the minimum requirements in experience per

the substitution clause for education. Seven candidates appeared on the eligible list, which was certified once, resulting in six appointments and one removal.

The appellant did not indicate on her application that she possessed the required license as a Registered Professional Nurse. She indicated that she possessed a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree in Social Work, and a Juris Doctorate degree. As her advanced degrees were not in Public Health or a health related field, she was required to have three years of specialized experience per the substitution clause. She indicated on her application that she was a provisional Quality Assurance Specialist Health Services, an Assistant Social Work Supervisor, a Social Worker 1, a Psychiatric Social Worker, and she listed positions as a Law Clerk and Legal Intern. On her resume, the appellant listed additional positions as a Legal Intern and Legal Extern. None of her experience was accepted, and she was found to be lacking three years of specialized experience in the field of quality assurance which included monitoring and/or evaluation of clinical or human services records and programs, which may include allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or incidents of client abuse or safety and well-being.

On appeal, the appellant maintains that her Master's degree in Social Work should be accepted as related to public health, and that she possesses the required experience in her various positions.

CONCLUSION

N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.6(a) provides that applicants shall meet all requirements specified in the promotional examination announcement by the closing date.

Quality assurance involves performing program and/or facility evaluations of all aspects of clinical care and administrative services provided by any departmental unit or facility, and may assess and evaluate reports or incidents of client safety and neglect. Such responsibilities include, but are not limited to: collecting, reviewing, and analyzing data to contribute to better utilization of resources in such areas as risk management, program evaluation, infection control, utilization review, and staff development; identifying and analyzing factors that contribute to inappropriate utilization of services, situations, or processes, and which promote or reduce optimum patient care; assessing, reviewing and evaluating reports or allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or incidents which may impact a client's safety and well-being; and reviewing clinical and social service records, individual habilitation plans, treatment team functioning, and facility programs/services for compliance with policies, procedures, and standards for optimal clinical care. Additionally, quality assurance work involves participating as a team member of the quality assurance team in the analysis and evaluation of a variety of documents to identify problems and recommending appropriate changes in the areas of: (a) clinical necessity for admission/discharge; (b) necessity for

extended stay; (c) clinical necessity for professional care/services rendered; (d) quality of care/services rendered; (e) timeliness of care/services rendered; and (f) incident review.

The appellant was deemed to be ineligible for the subject examination since she lacked three years of specialized experience. A review of her application indicates that this determination is correct. The appellant argues that her Master's degree in Social Work should be accepted as related to public health. In this regard, the Commission utilizes the U.S. Department of Education's Classification of Instructional Programs 2000 as reference authority to determine if degrees and/or coursework fall within a specific academic discipline. That reference indicates that Social Work is "a program that prepares individuals for the professional practice of social welfare administration and counseling, and that focus on the study of organized means of providing basic support services for vulnerable individuals and groups. Includes instruction in social welfare policy; case work planning; social counseling and intervention strategies; administrative procedures and regulations; and specific applications in areas such as child welfare and family services, probation, employment services, and disability counseling." This is distinct from Clinical/Medical Social Work, which is "a program that prepares individuals for the specialized professional practice of social work, in collaboration with other health care professionals, in hospitals and other health care facilities and organizations. Includes instruction in social work, psychiatric case work, clinical interviewing techniques, therapeutic intervention strategies, patient testing and evaluation, patient and family counseling, social rehabilitation, patient care planning, record-keeping, and support services liaison." While the appellant's course listing has a few classes in mental health issues, her information does not establish that she has a degree in Clinical/Medical Social Work rather than a degree in Social Work. Thus, her Master's degree is not acceptable as a substitute for experience.

Next, for her provisional position, the appellant listed three duties almost verbatim from the job specification for the subject title. Simply quoting the duties contained in the job specification on an application is not a sufficient basis on which to determine if a candidate's specific duties would meet the requirements for an examination. Candidates must demonstrate that the duties they perform qualify them for admission to the examination. *See In the Matter of Maxsine Allen and Vivian Stevenson* (MSB, decided March 10, 2004). As such, the appellant's experience in her provisional position was not accepted by Agency Services. On appeal, the appellant does not provide any duties for this position. As a result, this experience cannot be qualified, and therefore is not acceptable. Even if it were to be accepted, the appellant has accrued one year, ten months as a provisional in the subject title as of the closing date, and would still lack one year, two months of applicable experience.

The appellant's remaining positions are in the legal field or in social work. The appellant's experience in the legal field is clearly not applicable. Social Work, while addressing allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or incidents of client abuse or safety and well-being, does not have as a primary focus quality assurance including monitoring and/or evaluation of clinical or human services records and programs. While the appellant may have monitored and evaluated records, this was in relationship to her supervisory duties, not as program and/or facility evaluations of quality. In order for experience to be acceptable, 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). Thus, the appellant does not meet the announced requirements for the examination.

The appellant was denied admittance to the subject examination since she lacked the minimum requirements in experience per the substitution clause. An independent review of all material presented indicates that the decision of Agency Services, that the appellant did not meet the announced requirements for eligibility by the closing date, is amply supported by the record. The appellant provides no basis to disturb this decision. Thus, the appellant has failed to support her burden of proof in this matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that this appeal 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 31st DAY OF OCTOBER, 2018



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