



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

In the Matter of Holly Leonard,  
Superintendent, Parks and Forestry  
1(S1267D), Statewide

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

CSC Docket No. 2024-12

Examination Appeal

**ISSUED: September 20, 2023 (SLK)**

Holly Leonard appeals the determination of the Division of Agency Services (Agency Services) that she did not meet the education requirements for the open competitive examination for the Superintendent, Parks and Forestry 1 (S1267D), Statewide.

The closing date of the examination was January 31, 2023. The education requirements were a Bachelor’s degree in Forestry, Landscape Architecture, Park Planning, Park Management, Park Administration, Parks and Recreation, or Natural Resources Management, Cultural Resources Management, Environmental Studies, Wildlife Management, Biological Sciences or Ecology. In the alternative, the education requirements were a Bachelor’s degree in Environmental Policy, American History, Education, or Public Administration including or supplemented by 21 semester credit hours in any combination of wildlife management, research methods, natural resources management or parks and recreation management. The experience requirements were one year of experience in the operation or implementation of a park, recreation, forestry, or other closely related natural resources management program, or the administration, operation and maintenance of a marina, or in the general supervision, administration, and operation of publicly or privately owned lands and facilities managed for recreation and conservational use. A total of 60 candidates applied for the open competitive examination, 17 were admitted and 10 were determined eligible after the test. No certifications have been issued yet. The list expires on August 2, 2026.

On the appellant's application, she indicated that she possesses a Bachelor's degree in Earth Science with a minor in Environmental Science. She also indicated that for the Department of Environmental Protection, she was an Agency Services Representative from November 2021 to the closing date and an Office Worker/VSA/Naturalist from May 2016 to November 2021. Personnel records indicate that she was an Agency Services Representative 1 from May 2022 to the closing date, an Agency Services Representative Trainee from November 2021 to May 2022, and a Support Services CWA from May 2016 to November 2021. Agency Services determined that she did not meet the education requirements.

On appeal, the appellant states that as an Earth Science major from William Paterson University, most of her classes were also grouped with Environmental Sustainability and Environmental Science majors as these three majors shared the same core science classes. She asserts that Earth Science is closely related to Environmental Studies. The appellant compares her transcript to Pace University, which requires 47 program credits to graduate with an Environmental Studies degree. She attaches documentation to show that she has 47 credit hours that are parallel to Pace University's Environmental Science degree. Moreover, the appellant presents the definition of Research Methods and Natural Resource Management from different sources and lists college courses totaling 16 credits which she believes falls under the definition of Research Methods and 21 credits in Natural Resource Management. She argues that these courses provide her 37 credits, which is more than the 21 supplemental credits listed in the announcement. The appellant submits letters from three Superintendents who support her appeal.

## 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. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:4-6.3(b) provides that the appellant has the burden of proof in examination appeals.

In this matter, the record indicates that Agency Services correctly determined that the appellant was ineligible for the subject examination because she lacked the required education. Specifically, the appellant's degree in Earth Science is not listed as one of the required degrees in either the first or alternative educational option listed in the announcement. In order for the appellant's Earth Science degree to be accepted as a substitute, the appellant must provide documentation from an accredited institution of higher learning stating that the school would accept the appellant's credits in the particular course area as satisfying the requirements for a major at that institution. This documentation from the institution must come from the Department Head or Chair associated with the major or course area in question. *See In the Matter of Jason Tesauro* (MSB, decided February 27, 2002). However, the appellant has not submitted such documentation. Additionally, whether the appellant possesses the required supplemental credits for the alternative education

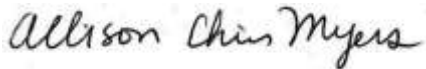
option is not to be evaluated until she demonstrates that she possesses an acceptable substitute degree. Accordingly, Agency Services' determination that the appellant does not possess the education requirements for the subject position is amply supported in the record and the appellant has not sustained her burden of proof.<sup>1</sup>

**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 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2023



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<sup>1</sup> It is noted that, while the appellant's experience was not evaluated in this matter as she failed to meet the education requirement, even if the appellant could demonstrate that her Earth Science degree was an acceptable substitute for one of the listed degrees, it is unlikely that the appellant possesses the required one year of experience. In this regard, the Superintendent, Parks and Forestry 1 title is a professional title in the "S" employee relations group (ERG). Titles in this ERG are second-level supervisors. The appellant's listed titles of Support Services CWA, which is an hourly, non-permanent position, and Agency Services Representative 1 and Trainee, which are non-professional titles, would normally only attain non-professional level experience. In State service, professional level experience is defined as experience in a title that requires a Bachelor's or higher-level degree, with or without a clause to substitute experience for education. *See N.J.A.C. 4A:4-2.5(a)3*. As such, it is likely that the appellant's prior experience is not at the level and scope required to be eligible for a professional level, second-level supervisory position.