

HIGHER DUTIES

PREFACE

We aim to be a cohesive and effective organisation and a leader in standards of service. Supporting our staff by providing career opportunities, such as 'acting up' in higher duty positions, is an important part of achieving this goal.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to formalise the office's commitment to providing staff with opportunities to 'act up' in higher duty positions. These opportunities will form part of the office's obligations under EEO to provide career development. The policy applies to all staff and covers short and long-term vacancies.

The policy aims to be fair and equitable without hindering the office's efficiency and effectiveness. Factors that will be taken into account are:

- the capacity of an officer to perform the duties
- the officer's substantive grading
- the availability/willingness of the officer to act up
- the equitable provision of acting up opportunities to all staff within the office who have the basic requisite skills
- the opportunity for an officer acting up to realistically gain new skills or experience.

It should be noted that not all vacancies will be filled. Factors which will bear on a decision not to fill a vacancy will usually relate to resource issues and the impact on other areas of the team's work. Explanations for a decision not to fill a vacancy can be sought from the relevant manager.

RESPONSIBILITY

Statutory officers and the Ombudsman have responsibilities under this policy.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Not applicable.

DEFINITIONS

Not applicable.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Short term higher duties opportunities

When there is to be a vacancy for a period of less than six weeks, the vacancy should be filled by the team manager or the direct supervisor of the vacant position making a recommendation to the statutory officer responsible for the team.

2. Long term higher duties opportunities

It is the policy of this office that long term temporary vacancies should be filled in accordance with the principles of merit.

Where the decision is to fill the vacancy internally, expressions of interest will usually be sought when there is to be a vacancy of six weeks or more. In limited special circumstances (such as only one qualified officer being available, eg accounts) the relevant statutory officer may decide not to seek expressions of interest.

Consideration will be given to externally advertising any vacancy in excess of six months. However, the decision to do so will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Ombudsman or his or her delegate.

The team manager should, as far as possible, advise all staff in advance of the vacancy and call for expressions of interest from staff who wish to be considered for the higher duties position.

A definite time frame should be adopted and advised for receiving and considering the expressions of interest. When there are a number of applicants for a higher duties opportunity a committee of at least two officers should be convened to consider the expressions of interest. Where necessary, interviews should be conducted by the committee.

On request, unsuccessful applicants should be given feedback on the reasons for the decision.

3. General

The filling of temporary vacancies either internally or externally is ultimately a matter for the Ombudsman or his or her delegate. Performance demands for a particular position may occasionally mean it is inappropriate to use the vacancy as a developmental/ learning opportunity. In such circumstances the Ombudsman or his or her delegate may make a direct offer of temporary employment to a person with suitable qualifications/experience.

OMBUDSMAN APPROVAL



Bruce Barbour
OMBUDSMAN