



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Public Administration and Communications

PA: 3/8/2 Vol. II

August 29, 2017

Ms. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel

Clerk of the House,
Parliament
Levels G-8, Tower D
International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road
Port of Spain

Dear Ms. Sampson-Meiguel,

**The Ninth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the
Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad
and Tobago for the Financial Years 2014 and 2015 with specific reference to the
Ministry of Health**

Please find enclosed the response further to the request dated July 03, 2017 concerning the Report at caption which was presented in the House of Representatives on June 30, 2017 and in the Senate on June 29, 2017.

In compliance with the Standing Orders 100(6) and 110(6) of the Senate and House of Representatives respectively, we provide the response on behalf of the Minister with the responsibility for the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, which was reported on by the Joint Select Committee. We wish to present to each House, the enclosed written submissions to the recommendations/ comments contained in the Report in respect of the Public Service Commission.

Kindly note that an electronic copy is simultaneously submitted via email to coth@tpparliament.org.

Sincerely,

Joan Mendez (Mrs.)
Permanent Secretary

OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

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Director, PAF
SSD - AL3
2017-08-29
(for submission)
Sean R. Ford
17/08/28

P: 68/13/1 Vol. II

In replying, the above number
and date of this letter should
be quoted.

ps. PAF 17/08/28
F.Y.A.
25/8/17

25th August, 2017

Hon. Minister Maxie Cuffie
Minister of Public Administration and Communications
Level 7 NALIS
Corner of Hart and Abercromby Street
Port of Spain

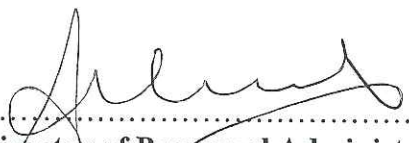


Dear Minister Cuffie,

Ninth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the Financial Years 2014 and 2015 with specific reference to the Ministry of Health

I refer to a letter from the Clerk of the House Parl.: 5/1/19 dated 3rd July, 2017 on the above subject and forward the attached Report which contains my response to the recommendations/comments, contained in the Ninth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Report of the Auditor General with specific reference to Ministry of Health.

Yours respectfully


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Director of Personnel Administration

SERVICE COMMISSIONS DEPARTMENT

Ninth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the Financial Years 2014 and 2015 with specific reference to the Ministry of Health

Public Service Commission responses to the recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee on the examination of the Report of the Auditor General for the years 2014 and 2015 with specific reference to the Ministry of Health are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Personnel Department should draft more attractive compensation packages for the vacant permanent positions at the MOH so that the Public Service Commission will find it easier to fill the vacancies. This will serve to boost the staff complement and increase the productivity of the MOH.

Response:

Attractive Compensation packages will assist the Public Service Commission in filling of vacancies. Consideration will also have to be given to qualification/experience. The Chief Personnel Officer is in the process of concluding the job evaluation exercise which should address all related issues.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Permanent Secretary should notify the Public Service Commission about the Ministry's needs for the additional staff so that arrangement can be made for these persons to fill the currently vacant positions by 31 July 2017.

Response:

Regulation 13 (1) of the Public Service Commission Regulations requires that "as soon as it is known that a vacancy will occur the Permanent Secretary or the Head of Department shall communicate to the Director in writing and shall make his/her recommendations regarding the filling of the vacancy."

The Director of Personnel Administration issues Circular Memoranda to Permanent Secretaries/Heads of Departments in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Public Service Commission Regulations requesting recommendations regarding the filling of vacancies in their Ministries/Departments. If there are temporary or acting incumbents in offices specific to the Ministry/Department recommendations must be submitted for consideration by the Public Service Commission.

If there are no incumbents to be considered, the Permanent Secretary recommends the filling of vacancies through advertisements of offices within only or within and outside the public service. Where there is a dearth of qualified nationals with the skills and competencies to perform specialized duties the Commission requests that the offices be advertised within the region.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health has requested the advertisement of offices for which no eligible applicants were found. Attached as an **Appendix** is a list of offices that has been advertised for the period 2014- 2017 and the status.

With effect from February 2017, Public Service Commission, in an effort towards greater efficiency, gave consent to Permanent Secretaries/Heads of Departments to issue Notice of Vacancies for offices that are specific to their Ministry/Department, in accordance with Regulation 13 (5) and 15 of the Public Service Commission Regulations.

While Ministries and Departments are given consent to advertise offices, screen applications, shortlist and assess candidates in accordance with the guidelines/specification, the Public Service Commission will continue to appoint and promote officers.

It should be recognized that despite issuing advertisements, the Public Service Commission often finds it difficult to recruit candidates who satisfy the minimum experience and training requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Public Management Consulting Division, Public Service Commission and Personnel Department should be contacted and communicated the need for the establishment of official posts, the filling of the posts with competent staff and the development of attractive compensation packages.

Response:

The Public Management Consulting Division of the Ministry of Public Administration and Communication has responsibility for the creation of offices on the establishment of Ministries/Departments after consultation with the Permanent Secretary/Head of Department. The Commission is thereafter guided by the job specification which is designed by the Chief Personnel Officer and the compensation package which is also determined by the Chief Personnel Officer.

On the recommendation of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, the offices are created and classified, the Public Service Commission approves the advertisement. After this approval, the Director of Personnel Administration issues Notices of Vacancy/Advertisements for offices inviting applications. The Commission decides the process for selection and subsequently establishes Order-of-Merit Lists from which appointments/promotions can be made.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The PS should indicate to the Public Service Commission, the need for additional staff so arrangements can be made for these persons to fill the currently vacant positions by July 31, 2017. Priority should be placed on the outfitting of the MOH so that duties can be completed and done so appropriately and efficiently.

Response:

The Regional Health Authorities do not fall under the remit of Public Service Commission.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Public Service Commission should hire more adequately qualified persons to fill the unit's vacancies so that the Internal Audit function can be executed with creditability.

Response:

Public Service Commission is guided by the job specification which sets out training and experience requirements for the offices in the Auditing stream.

The Audit structure for the Ministry of Health is as follows:

Number of Offices	Office and Salary Range	Minimum Experience and Training Requirements set out in Job Specification
One (1)	Auditor III (Range 53)	Training as evidenced by a professional qualification in Accountancy which is acceptable to the recognised local accountancy association.
One (1)	Auditor II (42E)	Considerable (4 to 8 years) experience in progressively responsible auditing work with supervisory experience; and training as evidenced by a General Certificate of Education ; or any equivalent combination of experience and training.
Three (3)	Auditor I (Range 35F)	Experience (18 months to 4 years) in work of an accounting or auditing nature including some supervisory experience; and training as evidenced by a General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level ; or any equivalent combination of experience and training.
Five (5)	Auditing Assistant (Range 30C)	Experience (18 months to 4 years) in accounting or auditing work and training as evidenced by a General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level ; or any equivalent combination of experience and training.

The matter of staff complement fall under the purview of the Ministry of Health and the Public Management Consulting Division of the Ministry of Public Administration

As shown in the table above, the training requirement for Auditor II, Auditor I and Auditing Assistant is General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level with varying experience; however, the office of Auditor III requires professional qualification.

The Public Service Commission can only recruit in accordance with the approved job specification.

It should be noted that these officers compete for other offices in the Public Service such as Accounting Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Human Resource Officer. There is frequent movement in such offices as opportunities for acting appointment/promotion are sought by officers to advance their careers. Further, the issue of whether an office is a scheduled travelling office impacts on decisions made by these officers on whether to accept the acting appointments/promotion.

The authority with responsibility for the design and review of Job Specifications is the Personnel Department. The Personnel Department has commenced a review of the Job Specification for jobs in the Internal Audit Units, in consultation with the Treasury Division and the Institute of Internal Auditors. Upon completion, the Public Service Commission will be able to recruit staff in accordance with the relevant Public Service Commission Regulations and be guided by the revised job specifications.

In the interim, the Permanent Secretary/ Head of Department can recommend officers to act in offices for short term periods in accordance with Regulation 26 (1) of the Public Service Commission Regulations.

If there is no suitable officer within the Ministry/Department who is capable of assuming and discharging the duties of the office, the Permanent Secretary must then submit a request to the Service Commissions Department for an officer to perform the duties.

The offices in the Auditing stream are generic as they are found in all the Ministries and Departments. As such, when vacancies arise for offices in the Internal Audit Units, recommendations are made by the Director of Personnel Administration to the Public Service Commission to fill the vacancies. Appointments/Promotions are made by the Public Service Commission in accordance with Regulation 18.

The Audit structure of the Ministry of Health and the status of those offices are set out hereunder:

Office	Number of Offices	Number of Office Filled	Number of vacant offices	Number of Vacant offices with bodies
Auditor III	1	0	1	1
Auditor II	1	1	Nil	N/ A
Auditor I	3	2	1	1
Auditing Assistant	5	4	1	1

The records of the Service Commissions Department reveal that of the ten (10) offices on the establishment, seven (7) offices are filled. There are no offices without bodies as there are incumbents acting in the offices.

Public Service Commission

APPENDIX

OFFICES FOR MINISTRY OF HEALTH THAT HAVE BEEN ADVERTISED FROM 2014 – 2017

NO.	OFFICE ADVERTISED	DATE OF ADVERTISEMENT	NOTICE OF VACANCY (Inside Public Service)	ADVERTISEMENT OF VACANCY (Outside Public Service)	STATUS OF ADVERTISED OFFICER
1	Specialist Medical Officer (Occupational Health)	30.01.15 (closing date)	✓	✓	CPO to finalize Job Specification in order to conduct interviews. Reminder sent to CPO dated 08.11.16
2	Food and Drugs Inspector I (Range 46)	10.07.15 (closing date)	✓	✓	Examination was held. 1.4.17 (Main) 17.5.17(Supplemental) Matter to be finalized.
3	Chief Nursing Officer/National Nursing Adviser (Range 64)	22.07.15 (closing date)	✓	✓	Advertised in Trinidad & Tobago and in Caricom countries three (3) times. Applicants who satisfied the minimum experience and training requirements of the office were over the age for entry into the Public Service - (4 persons). Memorandum sent to CPO in 2016 requesting that the age requirements be waived for entry into the public service for that office.
4	Occupational Hygienist (Range 56C)	04.09.15 (closing date)	✓	✓	Office filled. Interviews were held on 23.3.17

NO.	OFFICE ADVERTISED	DATE OF ADVERTISEMENT	NOTICE OF VACANCY (Inside Public Service)	ADVERTISEMENT OF VACANCY (Outside Public Service)	STATUS OF ADVERTISED OFFICER
5	Occupational Health Nursing Adviser (Range 45F)	04.05.15 (closing date)	✓	✓	Advertised in Trinidad & Tobago and in Caricom countries on two (2) occasions. By memorandum dated 7.12.16 the Ministry of Health was advised to approach Chief Personnel Officer to re-classify the office.
6	Public Health Inspector I (Range 34)	18.03.16 (closing date)	✓	-	Examination carded to be held on 21.10.17
7	Chief Medical Officer (Group 2B)	28.4.16 – 3.6.17	✓	-	Office filled
		23.09.16 (closing date)	✓	✓	Office filled
8	Director, Health Services Quality Management (Range 66)	11.03.15 30.05.09 01.06.10 28.02.11 (closing dates) 09.08.11 & 15.08.11 For English speaking Caribbean	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	Advertised on five occasions as no one was found suitable. Has not been re- advertised. Memorandum dated 24.5.17 was sent to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health requesting a subject matter expert to assist in the screening of applications.

NO.	OFFICE ADVERTISED	DATE OF ADVERTISEMENT	NOTICE OF VACANCY (Inside Public Service)	ADVERTISEMENT OF VACANCY (Outside Public Service)	STATUS OF ADVERTISED OFFICER
9	Principal Medical Officer (Environmental Health) (Range 68)	16.12.16 (closing date)	✓	-	Applications are with the Public Service Commission for screening
10	Coordinator, AIDS Prevention and Control Programme (Range 59)	16.12.16 (Closing date)	-	✓ Subject Matter Expert nominated for interview	Interview date to be scheduled
11	Pharmacist III (Range 56E)	30.12.16 (closing date)	✓	✓	Interviews conducted on 17.08.17
12	Chief Nutritionist (Range 58F)	27.01.17 (Closing date)	-	✓	Interviews scheduled in August 28.8.17
13	Medical Officer I (Range 62)	13.09.17 (Closing Date)	✓	-	Applications received to date are twelve (12)